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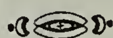

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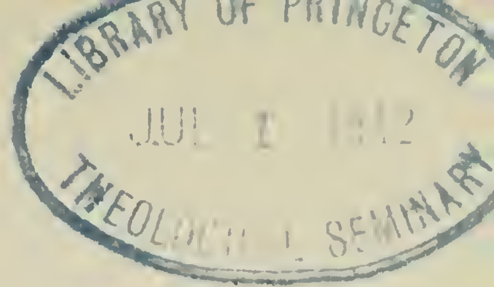
THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD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THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

AND ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

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(IN TWO VOLUMES)

VOLUME II

EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET
1906

Printed by

Morrison & Gibb Limited

FOR

T. & T. CLARK, EDINBURGH.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, AND CO. LIMITED.
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

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THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

LECTURE XIII.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

At first sight the contrast of Greece and Israel is absolute. Greece begins with man, and works up to the conclusion that the God and Father of this universe is hard to find and impossible to explain to the vulgar. Israel begins with, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out from the land of Egypt, and from the house of bondmen, and finishes in the proud assurance that This God is our God for ever and ever: he shall be our guide. So Greece has wisdom for an ideal, Israel holiness. Greece believes in man, and endeavours by reason to discover the divine in nature: Israel knows one God, and rests in the revelation he has given in history. To the Greek, the beauty and order of Nature are divine: to Israel, Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. The two stand at opposite poles of thought, and seem to have nothing in common.

Yet we shall find a good deal to soften the contrast.

In the first place, there is much likeness in their earlier political development. The primitive element in Greece may have been Canaanite, as that of Israel certainly was, though the conquering Hellenes came down from the wooded north, while the Israelites came up from the desert. But whatever be the truth of this obscure question, the *paganismus*[1] of Greece with its baser worships has a good deal of likeness to the *paganismus* of Israel with its worships of the Baals and Ashtaroth: and it contended with the Olympic gods as pertinaciously as the abominations contended with Jehovah, though it stood in much less direct opposition to them. Again, we see the same development in Israel as at Athens, from a scattered agricultural population under local rulers to a city governed by a king. In either case it became no mean city. The pride of Pericles in Athens with her glorious culture was no greater than the pride of Israel in the city of the Great King. The city, the city, is the burden of the prophets; and the towns of Judah hardly count for more than the towns of Attica.[2] It is the city which trembles at Sennacherib's approach, as Athens trembled that evening when one came and told the news of Elatea. It is the citizen who laments the fallen city, the citizen who cries, if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, the citizen who draws his

[1] By *paganismus* I mean something like heathenism at the end of the fourth century, namely,—a congeries of cults of a lower type, prevalent in the lower classes, but with adherents in the higher, and a good deal of influence on the professed supporters of a higher cult.

[2] This concentration of Israelite life in the city must have been helped first by Sennacherib's devastation of the towns, then by Josiah's limitation of sacrifice to the Temple.

picture of the children playing and the old folk sunning themselves in the streets of a restored city.

As at Athens, so at Jerusalem, the growth of wealth and commerce gathered the nobles into the city; and the princes of Judah fairly represent the Eupatrids of Athens. They were much alike in grinding the face of the poor and selling the righteous for a pair of shoes. They built up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity: and Solon found no very different state of things at Athens. The royal power dwindled before them, and its abolition is enough to shew that Codrus might have said like Zedekiah, The king is not he that can do anything against them; though the house of Codrus, like the house of David, had a long decline before it fell into obscurity. The Eupatrid government at Athens broke down under the economic failure which led to the reforms of Solon, the tyranny of Pisistratus and the rise of a democracy, and to the stirrings of religion connected with these changes. But Israel never reached these later developments, though no age of the world has seen the principle of personal responsibility, which is essentially the principle of democracy, more boldly stated than by Ezekiel. One cause for this arrest of development is the fact that Israel failed to become a commercial nation in his own land. The failure was not for want of will. The prophets from first to last have to oppose the trading spirit of the people; and Isaiah's genuine respect for the commerce of Tyre[1] is evidence that their action was not inspired

[1] Isa. xxiii. The authorship of the passage matters little in this connexion.

by any fanatical hatred of trade, but by the belief that Israel's particular mission was not in the direction the people wanted to go. Thus the cleavage between prophet and people was economic as well as religious. Solomon traded on his own account, and Jehoshaphat in this matter went after the house of Omri: but the prophets and the Law endeavoured to keep Israel apart from the surrounding nations, while the *paganismus* was all for trade and close relations with them. The question was vital, for it was plainly impossible to have Phœnician trade on a large scale without letting in the idol-worships and immoralities of the more civilized people. The *paganismus* might have won the day, but for the impossibility of making such a site as Jerusalem a commercial centre. Samaria might have been a place of trade, Jerusalem never can be. So it came to pass that in these respects the main course of Israel's development ran directly contrary to the national character.

Another reason why Israel never reached these later stages is that the process was violently interrupted. Athens threw back her barbarian invaders, but Israel became a prey. The destruction of Athens by Xerxes was a minor event of the war; but the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldees was the political extinction of Israel. The old order was at an end: and though the Israel of the Return was more than ever concentrated in the city, its development resembled that of Greece in a very different way.

If Xerxes burned the city, he neither destroyed the State nor carried away the citizens. Now, if some

earlier barbarian invasion had broken up the kingdom of Codrus and carried away the Eupatrids into captivity, we can safely say that the *paganismus* would have been strengthened as against the Olympic gods, and that the later history of Athens would have been on a lower plane. National calamity, and sometimes even hard-won victory, has a terrible power of debasing religion. That of Rome never lost the stamp of the Hannibalic War; and we can all see that the last great strife in Europe did France much harm this way, and Germany little good. The noblest enthusiasm can but partly undo the mischief. The Maccabean War itself left behind a train of evils, and the Elizabethan Church was the baser for the loss of its natural leaders in the Marian persecution. In Israel the strength of the same debasing power of national calamity is shewn by the great revival of the grosser worships after Josiah's death: yet somehow or other the destruction of Jerusalem was the ruin of the *paganismus*. It had held its ground for ages, and was distinctly gaining under the sons of Josiah; yet the calamity which ought to have completed its victory proved its ruin. Other causes helped later; but the fall of the city was the decisive blow. Now this means that monotheism in Israel was a moral power of exceptional strength, and forces on us the question, how it came to be such a power.

Some will tell us that the Semites have a peculiar genius for monotheism, and point to the fact that it originated among them, and still has firm supporters in Semitic Jews and Arabs. We may therefore grant

that they have a capacity for monotheism, and will often answer its great teachers with enthusiasm. But their general tendency is quite the other way. If Israel followed after Jehovah, all the rest went astray after the abominations, and even Israel was Semitic enough to go astray for a long time like the rest. The roots of the monotheism must be in the nation, not in the race, and we shall have to study its history, instead of calling in some imaginary Semitic instinct for a summary solution of the problem. All that can be said yet is that we are more likely to find its answer in the occasional action of great men than in any permanent tendencies of the people in general. So it was in Arabia, and so it is likely to have been in Israel.

But the appeal to history is not so simple as it used to be. Our fathers would have told us at once that Moses wrote the Law, Joshua made the sun stand still, David predicted sundry things of Christ, and so on. It was all very plain till a so-called critical school arose to darken counsel by dating the prophets before the Law, rooting out every trace of miracle and prophecy, and amending the narrative till pious readers can hardly recognize it. On the old theory we have a clear monotheism from patriarchal times with continual backslidings till the Captivity. On the other, the monotheism is gradually developed in the midst of the *paganismus*, wins passing successes under Hezekiah and Josiah, and becomes the one religion of Israel during and after the Exile. Which of these versions are we to take?

We might despair of certainty if we listened only to

the clamour of the extreme men. Some of them are fighting for religion. They take their stand, much as Luther did at Marburg, on God spake these words, as if it were self-evident that he must have spoken them in the most direct and literal sense. Sometimes they tell us that Jesus of Nazareth knew better than the critics, and settled once for all these questions of authorship, date, and accuracy of the books of the Old Testament. Others who fight for criticism seem to make it their business each to outdo the last in bringing down the date of the books a step later. Thus the Chaldean atmosphere of the second Isaiah, which forbids an Assyrian date, is made quite consistent with late Persian times; and if the Book of Ruth might have been an effective pamphlet against Nehemiah, this must be its date. As usual, the extremes have a good cause and a very bad case. For general unreason there is little to choose between them.

Nevertheless, a good deal of progress has been made by more sober students. Not many would now deny that the Law contains elements dating long after Moses, as well as elements dating long before the Exile. Nor are the more moderate conservatives blind to such possibilities as allegory in the early chapters of Genesis, poetry in Joshua turned by prosaic minds into a miracle, chronological mistakes in Kings, unhistorical exaggerations in Chronicles, incorrect ascriptions and even pure romance in some other books. Things like these disprove mechanical inspiration, but they do not disprove all inspiration. On the other side, the so-called critical

school stands firm and solid for two Isaiahs, for a fifth-century date of the Law in its present form, with Deuteronomy a couple of hundred years earlier, and for a second-century date of Daniel and the latest books of the Canon. Some go further; but so far the school may be considered unanimous: and if there has been a vast amount of wild writing in the name of criticism, these are deliberate conclusions of genuine scholars, and their arguments will have to be reckoned with. However, we can put at once the question that most concerns us. Is the picture of religion in Israel given by the Books of Kings passably true, or has it been manipulated all through, for edification doubtless, and—not to mince the matter—systematically falsified in the interest of the legalism which grew up in Persian times? After reasonable allowance for the natural tendency to see past times in the light of the present, is the story fairly true, or is it no better than the Chronicle of Dexter the Jesuit?

I speak now not as an Old Testament specialist, which I have no claim to be, but simply as a student of history. Nor can I see that the question is any way foreclosed by Christian belief. It seems evident that Jesus of Nazareth never took upon him to decide critical questions of authorship and date, but maintained only what every theist must maintain, that Israel's history was a training divinely given and divinely guided: and therefore I must absolutely deny that Christianity is committed to any particular opinions on these matters. It is clear that St. Paul's argument breaks down if Adam is no more than a personification, or that the Law

is any the less a parenthesis[1] if it lasted five centuries instead of fifteen, or that Christ cannot be a priest after the order of Melchizedek if Melchizedek never existed. Quotations of books are not deliberate decisions of their authorship, and the personal opinions of Apostolic men are not of necessity their deliberate teaching. In Butler's phrase, some serious persons may have spoken unadvisedly—I mean in later times—but the particular method of Israel's divinely given training—whether it was on this wise or on that wise—is as purely historical a question as the early growth of Rome, which also must on all theistic principles have been a training divinely guided: and as a purely historical question we are bound to treat it.

Now some conclusions of the critics would seem as certain as any unquestioned facts of history. If reasoning men still maintain the unity of the Pentateuch, or the Assyrian date of the second part of Isaiah, their reasoning is not easy to understand. The general rule is that if a writing reflects the character of a particular time, that is the date of the writer; and the rule is found to hold in all those parts of the Old Testament whose dates are fixed by independent evidence. Those then who make an exception are bound to give proof of the miracle involved in their theory; and the firmest believers in miracles may well pause before one that stultifies historical evidence generally. Of course, history *may* be mimicked by miracle, like geology; for some have held that the fossils were created *in situ*. But what is the evidence for the miracle? Against it

[1] Rom. v 20 : *νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν.*

is a moral difficulty. A moral purpose might be clear enough if Isaiah had only predicted a Return, as in fact he did;[1] but a *moral* purpose is hardly suggested for this detailed preaching to the hopes and fears of the men of the Return by Isaiah rather than by one of themselves. It would prove God's foreknowledge; but has that ever been seriously doubted by Theists? Till some *moral* reason is suggested, the fact will need strong evidence, to say the least, to make it credible. In its favour is a title, *ex hypothesi* contradicted by the book itself, and in any case no proof that the last editors of the book believed the whole of it to be the work of Isaiah. We do not ourselves care much for unity of authorship when we have our pamphlets bound; and if the second pamphlet were anonymous, the title of the first might seem to cover both. Quotations by New Testament writers are also put forward; and these are good evidence of current opinions, but they are not decisive of the writer's own opinion unless it can be shewn that he was thinking of the question of authorship, and giving a deliberate opinion on it. So far as I know, this has never been done—certainly not in the case of any quotation ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth. And supposing St. Paul's personal belief on such a question fully ascertained, it would still have to be shewn that such belief is unconditionally binding on Christian men.

I have traced the outline of this case as a sample of critical methods which can hardly be rejected without also rejecting the laws of evidence in common life; and

[1] Isa. xi 11, though connected with Assyria.

many other conclusions of the critics may be equally sound, though the evidence in their favour does not lie so much on the surface. Nevertheless, with all deference to the learning and industry of the gentlemen of the critical school, I must confess that I cannot altogether follow them. Mere students like myself can but look up with admiration to the magnificent certainty with which single verses, and often single clauses, are assigned to different authors or to particular dates. We are used to problems of this kind, and quite understand the method of dealing with them; but we cannot often work out our simpler questions with this astonishing precision. Nor do I feel sure that our critical friends have quite reckoned with some of the facts. For example, the eighth-century prophets come forward as reformers of an old religion, and must have had fair ground for their evident belief that the popular worship not only was an offence to Jehovah, but had been recognized as such by serious persons for a long time. Again, if we are told that Leviticus belongs to the second temple, while that of Solomon had a simpler ceremonial, or if we hear that Deuteronomy dates from the age of Jeremiah, I will demur no further than to hope that reasonable account is taken of the older documents and older customs and ideas traceable in the Law. Thus the story of the Creation seems ultimately Chaldean; but if anyone believes that it was not borrowed before the Captivity had made Chaldean religion to stink in Jewish nostrils, I can only say that his faith is more robust than mine. But granting the late date of the Law, I cannot help

thinking that there is a much older, clearer, and more ethical monotheism behind it than some of the critics allow.[1] Again, I am afraid too much is made of discrepancies. Thus I cannot see any inconsistency between the two views of the monarchy, as God's gracious gift and as a monument of the people's unfitness for something better. May we not—must we not—view every constitution of Church or State in precisely these two lights?—as so good, because it is God's gracious gift of law and order; and as no better, because we are not worthy of a better. Yet again, I am not sure how far some of the chief arguments are sound. Thus the Second Commandment is dated late, on the ground that we find it ignored, and that (so it is said) no attempt was made to enforce it till Hezekiah's time. The narrative says otherwise, of Asa for example.[2] However, this is disputed, so let it pass. Only, if the verse be set aside as a consequence of a theory, the absence of it must not be used as a proof of the theory. Certainly, the conservative position implies a most illogical state of things, with an acknowledged law universally ignored;

[1] Even from the account of Elijah, which does not seem one of the strongest parts of the conservative line, we may take a sample of the difficulties which are not uncommonly passed over too easily.

Even such a thoroughgoing advocate of the "critical" theory as Prof. H. P. Smith allows (*O. T. History*, 209) that the memoirs of Elijah "could not have been written long after his death," though he does not seem to accept anything in them as historical beyond Elijah's general opposition to Baal-worship and a part of the story of Naboth. Well, if they be legends, it must be granted that some of them may have grown up within the next generation. But unless we allow a longer time than this, I am afraid the scene on Carmel will become what Gibbon would distinguish as "a *public* lie." Mendacity must have human limits, even in the Bible.

[2] 1 Kings xv 12.

and some have pronounced it for this reason impossible. But a student of the Middle Ages will be slow to think it even unlikely, for he finds it a very common state of things. In one conspicuous case the parallel is exact. There were graven images in every church, and idols in every high place. The excuses for idolatry are much the same in all ages, and the only substantial difference I can find is a Christian label, and perhaps a little more decency. Nor did the reformers of those ages find any offence in it. Cluniacs and Cistercians and Mendicants took it as a matter of course, and the councils of Constance and Basel made no attempts to reform it. Even saints like Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas à Kempis himself raise no objection to it. Must we not as good critics conclude that the Second Commandment was invented, no doubt for edification, in the sixteenth century? We should have to revise our early church history and criticize some of the literature of the Middle Ages; but we know that it is quite possible to bring down the origin of Christianity itself to the twelfth century by a sufficiently courageous revision of documents, for the thing has actually been done.

Now do not mistake me here. I do not want to discuss the date at all; only to tell you why one particular argument does not seem quite so sound as might be wished. With the rest of the arguments that bear on the date I have no concern just now. Still less have I any desire to throw indiscriminate scorn on opponents of the conservative position. If some of them are a reproach to criticism, others give us as sound scholarship and as deep religion as the best of us; and

if they think fit to keep criticism separate from devotion, they are not unaware that historical questions involve spiritual forces as well as purely literary considerations. But every army has its camp-followers; and sometimes the excesses of the camp-followers check real sympathy with the army.

The *crux* of the matter is the origin of the conception that God is holy (so that man also should be holy), which grew up in Israel and nowhere else. If some of the other nations made their gods in the image of man, and even strove like the Greeks to find the excellence of deity in the highest qualities of man, they never succeeded in reaching an ideal at once moral and personal. The gods in Homer are personal enough, but they are not more moral than the men. Their distinctive immortality is a thing which superhuman beings may *have*, but which they cannot *be*. And by the time the philosophers found out the mistake they found also that good and bad were too closely joined in men to be clearly separated in the gods. Thus every attempt to reach a worthier ideal than the Zeus of Homer either sharply opposed it in a deistic way to everything human, or more commonly blurred the clear lines of personality by bringing in more or less of the pantheistic confusion which abolishes good and bad together. Fate as a power above the gods is neither moral nor personal; and even those who personified justice or goodness did not thereby reach the idea of a just or good Person.

In strong contrast to the gods of the nations, the God of Israel stands out in clear and vivid personality,

separate indeed from men by his infinity, but essentially opposed only to sin wherever found. The distinction of men as men from men as sinners is clearly drawn by the prophets, who build all their teaching on a true communion of God with holy men, though it was forgotten or distorted when the growth of dualistic legalism threatened to make an absolute separation between God and man. Amos already believes[1] that "the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets"; and the second Isaiah tells us[2] how the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, dwells not only in the high and holy place, but with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit. Thus the *differentia* of the divine nature is not in its contrast of genus with human nature as a whole, but in a moral contrast with sin. Greece and Israel were heartily agreed that man is in part divine; but while the earlier Greeks took small account of the part which is undivine, and their successors were disposed to explain it as ignorance or sense or finiteness, the prophets of Israel with keener insight fixed on sin as the one true evil in the world, as being the one thing inconsistent with its divine order.

Whence then came this great illuminating thought, that so far as man is unlike God, the essential unlikeness is not in sense or finiteness, but simply in sin—the breach of a personal relation to a personal God? This is the central question; but if we set it aside for a moment, the rest of the religion of Israel seems as much a product of evolution as that of Greece—in the same

[1] Amos iii 7. [2] Isa. lvii 15.

sense human, and more divine only in the sense that it rose higher and has been a more central part of the general evolution of religion. Whatever be its origin, all parties are agreed that it was first the worship of a clan-god, that the clan-god became a national god when a nation was formed, that it had a long struggle with a *paganismus*, and that it was enabled by its conception of holiness to overcome the *paganismus* and to reach the idea of a Lord of all the earth. So far there is nothing to suggest any special exceptional or miraculous element in the history. The peculiar idea of holiness is enough to account for the peculiarity of its development.

But now we must come to the point by asking how that idea itself arose. On any theistic view it must be a divine revelation; and *primâ facie* the case is very strong for supposing it suggested in a miraculous way. There is a prodigious difference of degree, and at first sight a difference also of kind, between the prophetic ideal of holiness and such Greek types as the Olympic gods, the good citizen, the *mystæ* of Eleusis, or the wise man of the Stoics. Even if the ethical relation of that ideal to right be thought not greatly to excel Stoicism, its religious relation to a personal God is altogether on a higher plane than anything we find in Greece. And if Greece will not bear comparison with Israel in this respect, certainly no other ancient nation will.

Nor does the idea look like an ordinary national growth in Israel. It is very plain that we can no more judge the people by the prophets than the common churchmen of early times by the great Fathers. If the best in Israel rose far above the best in Greece, the

worst in Israel was even more unholy than the worst of Greece. Corinth was not so bad as Tophet. Greece was not free from human sacrifices; but she had no Moloch, passed no children through the fire, and would scarcely have understood the murderous fanaticism of a Manasseh. Athens was less tolerant than Ionia—witness Anaxagoras and Socrates; but the one great persecution which stains the annals of Greece was done on Syrian soil, and the zeal of Epiphanes was rather for Greek civilization than for Greek religion. Whatever ideals the prophets cherished, holiness is not an idea we should expect to find growing up in so corrupt a city as Jerusalem. In the desert, or on some simple country side, it might seem more natural.

The contrast with other nations is very great; and we cannot suppose that so isolated a result was reached in Israel without some particular divine or providential guidance. But what form did it take? In the first place, the idea that such a development must have been made by insensible steps is one carried over from biology, where it seems untrue, to history, where it is quite contrary to experience. So gifted a people as Israel cannot have failed to produce great men at intervals to mark—and to deflect—the line of motion. There does not seem to be much legend about the story of David; and if Moses and Abraham are more or less idealized, they need not on that account be unhistorical. If we accepted without criticism all the current stories about King Alfred we should get some serious anachronisms, but by no means an entirely untrue picture of him. A man is not proved to be legendary if a good deal of legend has

grown up round him. Great thoughts—and surely the unity and the holiness of God are great thoughts—call for great men to declare them. They are not impressed on common mortals by cold reasoning and dry-as-dust antiquarianism, but only by the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of men who live by truth, and count all other things as loss if they may gain truth. Great men are not merely the straws that shew us which way the current flows: they are more like the winds of heaven striving on the deep, and often beating dead against the current. And as the wind bloweth where it listeth, so is the coming of a great man. It is chance in the sense of being due to obscure causes; but no theist can allow that it is chance in the sense of coming to pass apart from the ordered guidance he is bound to find in history. Thus there would seem to be nothing of itself unlikely in the tradition that there were great men holding some such places in the evolution as are assigned to Moses and Abraham.

Perhaps even the historical evidence for it is rather stronger than is sometimes supposed. The evident belief of the prophets in the antiquity of their teaching must count for something: and it is confirmed by the double source JE of the Pentateuch. As this represents an earlier phase of religious thought than the prophets, it ought not without strong reason to be crowded down on the generation before them. Unless there was a strangely rapid development in the ninth century, it might just as well be dated back to Solomon's time. And as it is agreed that the stories are tradition, not pure inventions of the writers, they must reflect the belief of a considerably older period. If this be so, we get a

clear ethical monotheism, doubtless inferior to that of the prophets, but still of a pretty high sort, thrown so far back into the past that the main "conservative" position—of dating its origin long before the Conquest—becomes fairly credible: provided always that we do not turn Moses and Abraham into finished Christians.

Similarly we must allow that remarkable events are possible as well as remarkable men. Are they not rather to be expected in the course of so remarkable an evolution? Some of those claimed as miraculous may very well bear a different explanation; but if others remained, I should still prefer to look at them from the side of providence, rather as steps of a divine plan which might need to be declared, than as exertions of a divine power which could not need to be further proved than it was already. However great may be the mighty hand and outstretched arm, still greater is the guiding and directing power which any theistic belief compels us to see in the general course of the history. Supposing, for example, it could be shewn that the various ideals of the future found among the prophets converge on that which was real in Jesus of Nazareth, this would be to thinking men a more impressive fact than the fulfilment of particular predictions in particular events of his life. Instead of merely proving foresight, it would raise questions not easily answered about the correspondence of a historical person to the highest aspirations of past ages. Were miracle ever so true, its miraculous aspect could not be more than secondary. This is plainly stated in more than one saying ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth,[1]

[1] Mt. vii 22, 23; Lu. vii 22 (noting the climax) Joh. xiv 12.

and I think is not obscurely hinted by the Old Testament writers, who seem generally more anxious to impress on us that an action was divine in origin than that it was miraculous in form.

But the strongest imaginable *primâ facie* case for miracle could not do more than remove *primâ facie* objections, and leave a clear space for such positive evidence as there may be. We cannot begin by summarily taking it for granted that so particular or providential a guidance cannot have been given without miracles. Lofty as the teaching of the prophets is, it has its echoes elsewhere. The Spirit which rested on Isaiah was not a stranger to Æschylus and Plato. Nor do we want for signs that religion grew in Israel under the influence of history very much as it grew in other nations, though it succeeded much better in turning the physical holiness of separation into the ethical holiness of purity and truth, and the ceremonial requirement of clean hands into the moral requirement of a clean heart. The general course of the development is much the same as in Greece, though on a higher plane. First come the lower conceptions, then the higher, and in later times a phase of scepticism represented for Israel in Job and Ecclesiastes,[1] and at

[1] So McNeile, *Introd. to Ecclesiastes*, 52. "In the mind of Koh. were germinating thoughts which find striking parallels in the fragments of Xenophanes, in the teaching of the early Stoics, and in that of the Sceptics represented by Pyrrho. And this is but a concrete example of the state of mind which must have been widespread in the Hebrew race during the last two centuries before Christ. It shews—not that Koh. came under the immediate influence of any one Greek school, but—that the natural development of the two religions, Hebrew and Greek, proceeded (broadly speaking) on the same lines, and produced certain affinities between them."

last it withers into Pharisaism. Neither Israel nor Greece could save the ancient world, and Christianity which answers for the modern is rather a branch from the roots of the old tree than a continuation of the stem.

The one thing needful is to keep all these questions firmly to the ground of history. If I believe that God spake these words, in the sense that he gave them as a law to Israel, I leave it so far open whether he declared them in thunder from the cliffs of Sinai, or spoke them in communings of the heart to them of old. This is a question of fact, to be decided on grounds of reason from the whole of the evidence—neither by the tyranny of an unreasoning traditionalism which sees nothing divine except in signs and wonders, nor by the special pleading of a mechanical criticism which ignores human nature in its chase after literary possibilities, and can only make out a plausible case by first assuming unlimited falsification and then correcting it with unlimited guesswork. We sometimes wonder whether the guesses are truer than the lies. Criticism of this kind is a return to the stage of the Ptolemaic astronomy, which gave a purely formal and geometrical account of planetary motions, without any attempt to discover the forces which determine those motions. In the same way these critics carve out the books before them in a literary and formal way without seriously considering what men are likely or unlikely to do. Likely or unlikely is all the same to them, so long as there is a literary possibility.

If some of you think I have taken too seriously what

may seem to them self-evident absurdities in the conservative position, I would answer that we are not wasting time in trying to see something of the bearing of these things. Opinions may be false, they may even be absurd; but I cannot bring myself to set down for self-evident absurdities beliefs on which our fathers lived, which still find scholars to defend them. Such a book as *Christus Comprobator* may be one of the last I could agree with; but it is also one of the last I should care to treat with any disrespect. These questions of Old Testament criticism are not the vital things which partizans are bent on making them; but if the conservative view is largely mistaken, it stands at all events for the truth that all our knowledge is quite as much given to us from above as won by efforts of our own: and no serious person can doubt that we greatly need the reminder.

If we have spent a long time in settling our general view of the history of Israel, we have also come to some conclusions on the main line of advance in the conception of the knowledge of God. Unless we assume a primitive revelation, the beginnings of the religion of Israel must have been rude and low. But this is a prehistoric stage. If we take our stand on the Pentateuch (omitting the Priestly Code and Deuteronomy) as in the main a production of at least the ninth or tenth century, and fair evidence for some time before it, we get an ethical and practically monotheistic conception of God. Ancient or forbidden superstitions may be relics of an older state of things; but that state of things is prehistoric. The divine names do not stand for powers of nature; and if

the plural Elohim points to polytheism, it points to an advanced and reflective stage of polytheism, in which the gods form a class, and therefore to a long development. But if Elohim is God, Jehovah[1] is Elohim in Israel. By whatever process Jehovah became the national god of Israel, this too belongs to a past which was ancient in the eighth or ninth century. Identifications with Baal or Moloch, or with some Kenite or some Assyrian god, are not convincing. So far as we know, the worship of Jehovah is purely Israelite; and if it still (in the eighth century) has some totemistic features, the actual totem, if there ever was one, has utterly disappeared. Of course there are guesses; but guesses are guesses—the one thing certain is that they are uncertain.

The totemistic features we mean are three—that Jehovah is the only native god we can trace, that the ordinary sacrifice is a feast of communion with him, and that he is in some sense placed on a level with the gods of the nations. But this needs explanation. In saying that Jehovah was the only native god, we mean that the other gods worshipped by individuals were foreigners. Though there was a constant tendency to worship Jehovah in the same way as the other gods were worshipped, there does not seem to have been much wish to make one of them the national god instead of Jehovah. The chief attempt was made under the influence of Jezebel, herself a foreigner. They were worshipped *before* him, or in his presence—less as rival gods than as patron saints or guardian angels, who might help certain

[1] Perhaps we may keep the usual form of the word, though it dates only from 1518, and is certainly wrong.

persons, or anyone in certain cases. And in saying that Jehovah was the God of Israel, as Chemosh was the god of Moab, we do not mean that he was in the same way the God of Israel. As far as the relation of protection goes, there may have been little difference. Mesha gains his victories by the help of Chemosh, much as David gained his by the help of Jehovah. But a god who is set forth as the creator of man, the sender of the Flood, the caller of Abraham, the deliverer from Egypt,—above all, a God to whom the daring challenge is addressed, Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?—such a God is lifted by his righteousness and world-wide power far above the local and unrighteous gods of other nations. We can imagine a Moabite song of victory—

> So let all thine enemies perish, Chemosh!

but they would scarcely have added—

> But let them that *love* him
> Be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

Simple and anthropomorphic as the Israelite conception may be, and not free from limitations and imperfections, still it is mainly ethical, and therefore essentially ethical. Its origin lies further back than we can trace; for it is not only no invention of the writers, but must be older than the stories in which we find it. Now this conception of God shaped the whole development of religion in Israel. Everything was involved in it from the first, and everything was evolved from it by the training of Israel's history. A subordinate ethical element in the conception of the divine is not uncommon, and may remain undeveloped; but a God who is mainly ethical must sooner or later be recognized as wholly

ethical. Righteousness cannot be partial: it must have all or nothing. A righteous God must be a jealous God who abolishes first unrighteous rivals, then unrighteous conceptions of himself, till he shines out in that perfect righteousness which is perfect love, and calls for perfect love from men. This conception also determined the meaning of the belief in Israel's election from the nations, which is just as much an integral part of the old traditions. Such an election means first that the electing God is Lord of all the earth; but an election by Chemosh would only be to private favour, and an election by a righteous God might possibly be the reward of Israel's righteousness. So Israel was always disposed to think. But what was to be said when calamities seemed to shew that Israel was anything but righteous? The election, then, could only be one to service for the good of the whole world. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Even the Deuteronomist may not quite rise to this, though he repeatedly says, Not for thy righteousness; but this is the only theory of election consistent with the righteousness of God. We find glimpses of it in the earliest writings of the Old Testament, and clear statements in the later; and if the Scribes and Pharisees rejected it, the spirit of the old religion is more truly given by Simeon's Light to lighten the Gentiles,[1] and by St. Paul's discussion of Israel's rejection.

The line of advance from the primitive position to a

[1] Lu. ii 32. I make no apology for quoting it as genuine. These intensely Jewish hymns must have been written by Jews, and at a time before Israel had finally rejected Christ—say, before A.D. 62.

higher one is clearly marked out by the First Commandment, which must be early too.[1] It summarily sets aside the usual pleas, that other gods are real, that they have power, and that they may sometimes help. It simply forbids their worship as treason to Jehovah. Men who trusted in Jehovah would soon find out that the unholy gods have no power at all—that they are nothings, and therefore shames and abominations. The downward path is equally clear. Men need not renounce Jehovah, or cease to worship him. Only let them forget that he is righteous, then there will be no reason why Chemosh or Baal should not be worshipped along with him or in his place. The prophets took one road; the people went the other.

In early times the will of heaven was not sought solely by ethical means, but largely also in the pagan fashion by dreams and omens, in divination by Urim and ephod, by casting lots or in similar ways, and often on similar practical questions. Saul's case is enough to shew that there were some who looked on the prophet as a sort of wizard, whose advice might in any case be worth his quarter of a shekel of silver. Nor is there much idea yet of any inspiration but that of a temporary possession by the deity. Prophecy in Israel never quite lost this ecstatic character; and this gave it both strength and weakness in the world, for while some admired in Eastern fashion the man that was beside himself, others never ceased to mock the prophet's rough

[1] Discoveries of earlier decalogues in Exodus are not very convincing. Later decalogues might doubtless be found in Leviticus, if they were worth the trouble.

coat of sheepskin, his strange preaching and wild excitement, his oracular sentences and harping on evil to come, and most of all the uncouth symbols he used. Some of them we can hardly suppose literally carried out; but even the accounts of them must often have struck the profane as bad practical jokes at best.

The first great epoch of Hebrew prophecy is the age of Samuel. We find individuals before, like Deborah; but now it is organized in schools, most likely by Samuel himself. The main purpose of the schools would seem to have been the cultivation of prophecy and religion generally. In some ways they may have been like the modern dervishes; but they seem to have had a higher tone, and so far as we know had no esoteric mysticism. Neither were they monks, for they married,[1] so that they must have been free to live in the world. If their life was austere and simple, it was not ascetic. They seem also[2] to have provided a new sort of public instruction, distinct alike from the ritual of the tabernacle and from the sacrifices that were offered all over the country.

But prophecy had also a political side. If Israel was a chosen people, the prophet who spoke for God had to keep them faithful to their calling and election. And if Israel was a chosen people, the earthly king could not be more than a deputy of the heavenly King, subject in matters touching the theocracy to such special orders as the prophets might deliver. For some time king and prophet agreed very well. Saul's failure was rather

[1] 1 Sam. viii 1; 2 Kings iv 1.

[2] 2 Kings iv 23.

personal than official: and if the prophet rebuked David's sins, he was too loyal to go after Absalom or Adonijah. The rift between them became visible when Solomon went astray and actively promoted the worship of strange gods. How far it was widened by Jeroboam is a disputed question; but it does not concern us just now, for the calves were at any rate not other gods. There was no intention of forsaking Jehovah till Ahab, or rather Jezebel, brought the question to an issue.

But if Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel, he left the calves and the irregular sacrifices on every high hill and under every green tree; and presently it became evident that the worship of Jehovah might be just as demoralizing as that of foreign gods. It was not the name of the god, but the sensuous and immoral conceptions of him, that led to sensuous and immoral worship and sensuous and immoral living. We have no more than a thread of history for the dynasty of Jehu; but when we get fuller information from Amos we hear very little more of the sons of the prophets. The evils of calf-worship were no longer masked by those of Baal-worship: and if the prophets shut their eyes to them, they ceased to be witnesses for truth. Prophecy had to fall back on faithful individuals, and to renounce the hope of reforming the state by such another revolution as that of Jehu. The prophets were still statesmen: but if force had shewn its impotence to cure moral evils, nothing was left but persuasion; and if the people refused to be persuaded, they must eat of the fruit of their doings. The righteousness of Jehovah

required that an unrighteous kingdom should perish; and if it was to perish, it must perish in the way rotten kingdoms perished in that age. "Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land." [1]

But if the State was doomed, the individual remained. Assyria did for Hebrew thought something like the work which Macedonia did for Greek thought. The ancient landmarks of the nations vanished in the universal ruin—Calno and Carchemish, Hamath and Arpad, Samaria and Damascus; and at last the primeval power of Egypt went down before the might of Esarhaddon. And the Assyrian brought neither culture like the Greek nor peace like the Roman: his work was mere destruction and uprooting. It was a return to savage warfare when the gods of the nations were burned with fire, and scattered groups of broken men with faith confounded soon forgot them in a land of exile.

So too must it be with Israel. Written prophecy begins with a grand picture of God's righteous judgment of the nations. "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn it back"; [2] and so in the same words, of Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, Israel, for there is no respect of persons with Jehovah. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." [3] At first the threat was vague; but it was not long before the prophets came to see that the mysterious *it* could only be the flood of Assyrian conquest. Israel's doom was the same—yet not the

[1] Amos vii 17. [2] Amos i 3 *seq.* [3] Amos iii 2.

same—as that of other nations, for Israel's God was not like other gods, local and unrighteous. If Israel would only rise to this old teaching, the kingdom might fall, but a church of Israel would still be the kingdom of God. Israel would not listen; therefore the northern kingdom passed away for ever.

Things were rather better in the South. The monarchy stood firmer, the nation was more compact, and in Jerusalem it had a better capital than Samaria, and one less exposed to foreign influences. The priests also were stronger, for they were not creatures of the king as in the North. If Jehoiada is no such glorious figure as Amos or Isaiah, he rises far above Amaziah the priest of Bethel; and the overthrow of Athaliah by the priests must have made them the strongest power in the State. Remiss as they were, mere interest must have made them use their influence to keep the government from tampering with foreign gods. So four successive kings, from Joash to Jotham, are said to have "done that which is right," but in each case it is implied not with a perfect heart. If the outside was fairly correct, the inside was another matter.

Then came the crash in the reign of Ahaz, and the siege of Jerusalem by Rezin and the son of Remaliah, as Isaiah contemptuously calls him. But Judah's doom was not yet spoken, and Isaiah's word on the counsel of Pekah and Rezin is clear and confident. "Thus saith the Lord, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass."[1] Nor did it. Only the sarcastic unbelief of Ahaz calls out the tremendous prophecy of Immanuel.

[1] Isa. vii 7.

Its colours deepen from devastation to captivity: yet the dark picture is lighted up with sure and certain hope. If the nation is carried away, a remnant shall return, for God is with us; and the remnant shall take root downward, and bear fruit upward. The great tree of David's house may be cut down to the ground; but a root shall spring up from it, "which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."[1]

Hezekiah's reign gave a breathing-space before the second Assyrian crisis: and now we see the policy of the reformers, to abolish the scattered sanctuaries where all sorts of immoralities were practised, and allow no sacrifice but at Jerusalem, where good order could be kept. Hezekiah began the work,[2] but a stronger hand than his was needed to finish it. There was wavering and faithlessness and tampering with Egypt; but in the day of decision Isaiah kept the city true, and his policy was gloriously vindicated by the overwhelming blow which crushed Sennacherib's host. It was some time before the next Assyrian army came filing past the Nahr-el-Kelb.

"In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord." The passing of the earthly king was the revelation of the heavenly; and the death-throes of the earthly kingdom were the birth-pangs of a church. On the little band of Isaiah's disciples[3] burst the horrors of Manasseh's persecution; and for two generations a murderous and filthy *paganismus* was supreme. A monotheism which could survive this must have been more deeply rooted than some of the critics allow.

[1] Isa. xi 10. [2] 2 Kings xviii 22. [3] Isa. viii 16.

When the reforming party raised its head again it had in Josiah the most resolute king of David's line, in Jeremiah a prophet hardly second to Isaiah, and in the newly found Book of Deuteronomy a clear plan of reform. Josiah carried it out with ruthless energy. The high places and the local altars were dismantled and defiled, and, so far as public authority could compass it, an end was made of sacrifice outside Jerusalem.

Desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. The great reformation was carried through at last; but at a fearful cost, for it was as much a work of violence as Jehu's. It was work that had to be done, like the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but the shock of the change was even greater. The extinction of local sacrifices would seem to multitudes the extinction of religion outside Jerusalem; and there must have been widespread and real spiritual distress. We might see something like it now if we could imagine the next *ex cathedra* decision of the Pope to close all the churches, and order that masses should never more be said excepting at St. Peter's. In fact, what represented public worship was suppressed all over the country; and the gap was not yet filled up by synagogues. If the local worships were full of scandals, they were not made up of scandals. They stood for high truth—that Jehovah is not the local god which the reforming party seemed bent on making them; but on the other side, it was rightly felt that these worships had proved incurably immoral, and would have to be abolished. So the work was a sword of division in the State, for we may be sure that Shaphan's was not the only great

house divided against itself: and when Josiah's resolute guidance was lost, and lost by what must have seemed even to some of those who loved him best a judgment of heaven on his rashness, we see not simply a reaction of the usual sort, but a debased reaction marked in the princes by factious violence, in priests and prophets by a league of falsehood[1] in Jehovah's name, in the people by a new growth of fanatical trust in the temple of the Lord—the temple they were making a den of robbers. The anarchy of unruly princes, lying prophets, and noisy patriots was quieted for a time by the fate of Jehoiachin; but Zedekiah was not the man to keep it quiet, and when it burst out afresh it swept away the State.

In truth, the dilemma was hopeless. When once the nation had been thoroughly debauched by Manasseh there was no lifting it to better things without removing the high places, no removing them without an unsettlement of opinion which led to even worse things. But if the reformation was too late to save the State, it was not too late to save religion. Only, the knowledge of God had to be put on a new footing. If the nation had sinned, a righteous God could not hold guilty such individuals as had not been partakers of the sin; and if so, the calamities which came on them along with others could not be for them any sign of divine wrath. So Jeremiah marks a greater change than Isaiah. He sees the weakness of reformations from the outside, like those of Jehu and Josiah. Even a divine law will not

[1] Jer. v 31, and elsewhere. Not always conscious falsehood, though this too must have been common; but always utter disregard of the spirit of true religion.

be obeyed till it is written in the hearts of men. Now this is the change from collective to individual religion, from objective to subjective. If God writes his laws in the heart, he must deal with men singly, so that the knowledge of God must be direct and personal, and essentially independent of all action of other men. And this was a position the prophets never again abandoned. Even Jesus of Nazareth never preached the religion of the individual with more deliberate emphasis than Ezekiel; and the second Isaiah has the whole doctrine in his promise, All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.[1]

If the exiles in Babylon sought the peace of the city in which they dwelt, their hearts were with the city that lay in ruins.[2] They were a better sort of people than the refuse of rebels against God and man that went down into Egypt with Johanan the son of Kareah, and many of them must always have been loyal to Jehovah. Why then had this evil overtaken them? They had time to think out the question, for they were abiding many days without a king, and without a sacrifice, and yet without an image, and without ephod and teraphim. The results of their thinking are embodied in the prophecy of Ezekiel, the compilation of the Books of Kings, the prophecy of the second Isaiah, and in some

[1] Isa. liv 13, quoted in this sense Joh. vi 45.

[2] I need not discuss the theory that there never was a Return. For the credit of the theorists, it is much to be wished that it were somewhat saner. Literary cavils over the very prosaic Books of Ezra and Nehemiah will not prove it without some reasonable explanation of the time and circumstances which made it possible to pass off so monstrous a string of fables.

of the Psalms. It also seems likely that a good deal of the material of the Priestly Code was now collected.

In the first place, they had no doubt that they were even now the people of Jehovah. If he was righteous, he must care for those who were faithful to him; and if he was the Lord of all the earth, he was able to care for them even in a land of exile. If the city was in ruins, it could not be the one place he favoured with his presence; and if sacrifice had ceased, it could not be the one means of approach to him. The knowledge of God must be direct and spiritual; though if his grace is not tied to outward rites, it did not follow that men should undertake to abolish them.

When the more earnest of the exiles looked back on past history, they were soon satisfied that the calamity was a punishment for worship of other gods and immoral worship of Jehovah, for the oppression of kings, the lawlessness of priests, the transgression of the people. Now therefore how to put an end to these things? Clearly, the worship of Jehovah must be so regulated in all its details as to leave no excuse even for carelessness, much less for worse things. Ezekiel has drawn at length his ideal plan for the restored Church and State.[1] About half of it is devoted to the measures of the temple; then come the ordinances for the priests "the Levites, the sons of Zadok," while the Levites "who went astray after their idols" are degraded to the lower offices of the ministry. With these come commands moral and ceremonial together, but reminding us rather of Deuteronomy than Leviticus. There is no

[1] Ezek. xl–xlviii.

king; only a prince of David's house with a modest revenue and chiefly sacred functions, so that he cannot become an oppressor in the style of Jehoiakim.[1] Then, to put an end to the old tribal jealousies, the land is redivided by lot, and the city is made a *national* capital belonging to no tribe, and given a new name,—Jehovah is there.

No man can accuse of mere ritualism a prophet who sees clearly like Ezekiel the need of a new heart and a new spirit before men can walk in the statutes of God and keep his judgments.[2] In this he rises above Isaiah, and stands abreast of Jeremiah with his promise of the new covenant written in the hearts of men. Yet we cannot but feel that if ritual is no more than a means to Ezekiel, it is too much of an indispensable means, so that after all he is the first step in the long descent from the prophets to the scribes and the Pharisees. Not so the second Isaiah, the last creative genius of the Old Testament. He has the advantage of time over Ezekiel, for he writes near the end of the Captivity. The night

[1] The reaction against the oppression of the kings is very marked. Deut. xvii 15–20 may be summed up, that the king is not to be another Solomon, though there must have been some later offender in view. If we compare the emphatic command ver. 16 not to multiply horses with Rabshakeh's taunt, 1 Kings xviii 23 (if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them), we may conjecture an allusion to Manasseh. Jeremiah denounces with indignation the oppressions of Jehoiakim; but the memory of Josiah prevents him from denouncing the kings in general.

Ezekiel speaks more generally, and the oppression of kings is very conspicuous with him, as xliii 7–9. Specially interesting, however, is the provision (xlvi 17) for the resumption of the prince's grants (except to his sons) at the jubilee. If we may judge from the analogy of history, the royal estates must have been largely wasted on the turbulent nobles by the sons of Josiah.

[2] Ezek. xxxv 25–27.

was far spent, the day was at hand, so that he was able to look backward on the goblins of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Prophecy rises in him to its highest idealism, and speaks in him the noblest words of living power that it spoke before the Man of Nazareth took up the parable.

The prophets of Israel are all at one in telling us that a time shall come (in this world, not another) when God will do for men something better than the best which they can ask or think. But the ideal can only be reached by idealizing history, so that its form develops with the growth of history. Isaiah pictured an ideal king and an ideal kingdom of peace and prosperity; and when the real kingdom was fallen, Jeremiah and Ezekiel figured an ideal church of regenerate men. Both of these ideals are imperfect, for it is hard to keep the kingdom free from sinners, or the church from becoming self-righteous. The second Isaiah rises above them both. No man denounces more indignantly the emptiness of religion without righteousness. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen?" But this is not new: it only expands the old word of Samuel.[1] No man pictures the mission of Israel to the world with such vivid splendour; but this again was implied from the first in Israel's election by a righteous God, and is already recognized by Amos, or at any rate by Micah.[2] No man felt more keenly that the Captivity was the just reward of national sin. But it was still a problem, why the righteous had gone into captivity with the wicked. In old time the answer

[1] 1 Sam. xv 22.

[2] Amos ix 12; disputed by some. Micah iv 1–3.

was ready, that the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge; but the difficulty became greater than ever after the emphatic declarations of Jeremiah and Ezekiel[1] that every one shall die for his own iniquity, the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. The second Isaiah made a great step towards an answer.

The exiles in Babylon would soon have been absorbed by their neighbours if they had not been kept separate by their worship of a righteous God. Many no doubt were so absorbed; but the main body held its way through much suffering,[2] and became more and more a faithful remnant. With the third generation came a change of outlook. If they had not ceased to be victims of war, they were also witnesses for Jehovah. Even in Babylon their lofty monotheism found admirers, as it always did till Christianity outshone it. So sons of the stranger joined themselves to Jehovah,[3] and even common men began to feel that Israel was the Servant of Jehovah, who should bring forth judgment or the knowledge of Jehovah to the Gentiles. But this made the difficulty greater than ever. Why does Israel suffer, though he is the Servant of Jehovah? Nay rather, replies the prophet, Israel suffers just because he is the Servant of Jehovah, and his sufferings are for the healing of the nations. The proselytes he has made in Babylon are no

[1] Jer. xxxi 30; Ezek. xviii *passim*.

[2] If Ezekiel gives us no signs of any *special* oppression suffered by the exiles, the second Isaiah distinctly implies a change for the worse in their condition.

[3] Isa. lvi 6.

more than the firstfruits of a world of Gentiles that shall be won to the service of righteousness by the suffering of Israel. Ought not the Servant of Jehovah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

The Servant of Jehovah is Israel, but of course not Israel in his actual state of sin, for which the Servant has to make atonement. Nor does he seem to be the godly part of the nation: he is rather Israel in an ideal state personified. His kingdom is not of this world. He rules not by force but by the willing submission of the nations. His glory is not the royal glory of a Solomon, but the more than royal majesty that is won by suffering; and his redemptive work is not for the weak and the ignorant only like the Law, but for the rebels and blasphemers who are beyond the mercy of the Law.

The Christians very commonly apply all this without more ado to Jesus of Nazareth; and on their theory it is an excellent application. Nothing can be more in the spirit of the Servant of Jehovah than the saying which sums up the Gospel, that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. On this shewing there is a truth here that must reach the very ground of human nature; and it certainly agrees well with the fact we traced before,[1] that the suffering of the innocent for the guilty is the method of their moral restoration. That fact the second Isaiah saw with vivid clearness; but did he see all that the Christians have drawn out of him? The picture on the screen is an idealized Israel: does a

[1] Lecture VIII. p. 213.

future individual shine through it? It is hard for us to distinguish a personification from an incarnation of an ideal, and perhaps the writer's own mind was not perfectly clear. It may be as rash to deny as to maintain that somewhere in that gifted mind there was a dim feeling that if God is man's redeemer, a divine necessity will some day upon this earth of ours fulfil the divine ideal in some one living child of man. Such a belief will seem strange, if not absurd, to the pantheistic thought of our time, which may or may not believe in the race, but admits no possibility of perfection in the individual; but it is in perfect harmony with the monotheistic thought of Israel, which never presumed to find a limit for the possibilities of that which God may do in man for men.

The Old Testament conception of the knowledge of God rises to its highest in the second Isaiah; and after him nothing comes near his level but some of the later Psalms. The Book of Job, if this be its date, is magnificent as poetry; but as a contribution to the knowledge of God it must rank below the Prophet of the Exile. The only new thought of deep significance which came in after the Return is that of a future life. It must always have been familiar, if only as an Egyptian belief, so that the marked silence of the prophets must mean that they preferred unconditional trust in God to any attempts to pierce the secret of that which will be after death. And is not this trust in any case the highest ground to take? So when the doctrine came, it made less difference than we should expect. It was not universally accepted; and it rested on no definitely

alleged historical fact like the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Moreover, men were too busy with religion in other directions to see either the full cogency of the arguments for it or the full extent of the consequences that follow from it.

We shall not need to trace in any detail the long decline of Judaism through the scribes to the Pharisees and Sadducees. The natural man is much the same everywhere; so that the process is very like the long decline of the Latin Church through the scribes of the Middle Ages to the Pharisees and Sadducees of modern Romanism. Judaism, as we may now call it, began during the Exile as a genuinely spiritual faith, but with a strong belief that the best protection from further backslidings is such a system of detailed law as shall put with perfect clearness the conditions of a holy life and worship. The issue of this belief is the Priestly Code, which most likely contains a good deal of old material, but seems in its present form a compilation of Ezra's time, and was only then accepted as God's law for Israel. Then came an age of increasing love of law: the timid legalism of Ecclesiasticus is balanced by the heroic legalism of the Maccabees. The Law was everything: the Prophets were only sacred books. But no code can cover the whole of life with definite rules; so before long tradition was called in to interpret, and under cover of interpretation to make new law. They did well to make a hedge, if the law of the Lord is a dangerous pit and needs to be fenced; but the rabbis were soon so busy making hedges round the vineyard, that they were quite content to let it bring forth wild

grapes. Their highest ambition was to keep—nominally the Law, really their own traditions; and the knowledge of God was not in all their thoughts.

There was a further reason for this. The natural result of legalism was that a God separate from sinners was turned into a God inscrutable to men, as in Islam. Prophecy was turned into apocalypse, and the good things of the future were shifted from this world to another. An age of growing formalism was an age of growing transcendentalism. The movements ran parallel in Greece and Israel for a long time before they influenced each other. And an age of growing formalism was an age of growing pride and hatred of Gentiles. True, they were proud of their proselytes—Pharisees would compass sea and land to make a single one, but the pride was in themselves: for the proselyte they had no respect. "The proselytes are a scab to Israel,"—and there were worse sayings than this. And when Rome had inflamed every discord to fever heat, the Messianic hope itself became fierce longing to see the wrath of God poured out on the Gentiles. The war with Rome was not the hopeless thing Agrippa made it out to be; or if it was, the reason lay in the savage hatred of Gentiles which of necessity issued in civil strife. A united nation might have withstood Rome herself; but the Law can be a sword of division as well as the Gospel.

In some ways the Old Testament quite reaches the level of the New. No more glorious conceptions of God's all-ruling providence and awful holiness have ever been reached by men, and no more magnificent declarations of his goodness and unfailing mercy have ever come from

human lips than those we find in the Prophets and the Psalms. The firmest Christian must allow that Jesus of Nazareth added nothing to Micah's summary of human duty,[1]—except, he will say, power to act on it. So on the side of duty to man. Even Greece never shewed such goodness to the weak and helpless as we find in Deuteronomy. Some duties, indeed, are more fully declared in the Old Testament than in the New. Thus there was not much room for national duty in Roman times, when all civilized peoples lay inside one long frontier of twice three thousand miles, from Damascus to Carlisle and back again. Not that it is wanting in the New Testament—witness Paul. Jesus himself was an Israelite indeed when he mourned over Jerusalem, and when he refused to hurl a rotten Jewish nation on a rotten Gentile world. But in the Old Testament patriotism is a consuming fire of zeal from first to last. It flashes up at the outset in Miriam's song of triumph over Pharaoh's host;[2] and it shines out at the end on the gloom of the gathering storm when the last of the Hebrew prophets, James the Lord's brother, once again denounces wrath from the Lord of hosts on the oppressors of the poor.[3] Love of country is consecrated in the New Testament by its consecration of man for

[1] Mic. vi 8.

[2] The song in Exod. xv 1–18 must be very old. Without it, Miriam plays no such part in the Exode as would suggest to Micah vi 4 the idea that "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, *and Miriam.*"

[3] Jam. v 1–9. The picture of society is a strong argument for the early date of the Epistle. It agrees entirely with the state of things before the destruction of the city; but the rich class of oppressors must have been thoroughly ruined by the war. The sequel of the Roman destruction cannot have been very unlike the sequel of the Chaldean destruction.

whom Christ's blood was shed; but it is not and could not be illustrated so fully as in the Old.

Considered as a revelation or discovery of God, the Old Testament is much the highest of ancient times. No other lays down with equal clearness at once the unity of God as against the polytheism of the civilized world, his personality as against the pantheism of superior people, his holiness as against the debasing conceptions of men who thought him like themselves, and his goodness as against the bodings of conscience wherever it was awake. If the Law was in most respects a decline from the prophets, its connexion with their higher teaching enabled it not merely to call forth a sense of duty—any law whatever may do as much as that—but to turn the sense of failure into a sense of sin against perfect holiness. It neither slurs over the fact of sin like the Greeks, nor makes it part of human nature like the ascetics. By placing it in will and not in sense it opens a possibility that man may cease to be a sinner without ceasing to be man.

A possibility only, for Jesus of Nazareth said truly[1] that the Law had begun more than it was able to finish. It was imperfect just because it was a law, and that in more than one direction. In the first place, no law can cover with a sanction the whole ground of right and wrong, for the plain reason that while right and wrong are in the thoughts and intents of the heart, no sanction can get beyond outward actions. Again, as St. Paul reminds us,[2] it is not the business of a law to teach right

[1] Mt. v 17, not to destroy, but to finish.

[2] Rom. iii 20, vii 7 (*διὰ νόμου*, anarthrous), 13 *ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία.*

and wrong in a general way, but to declare certain forms of wrong so plainly that the wrong-doer cannot help seeing that he is doing wrong. In these cases it makes wrong visible as wrong; but other cases it will not touch, lest it should do more harm than good: and thoughts, however wrong, it cannot touch at all. It may put beyond denial what we know pretty well already; but even a divine law gives us no such strength as personal influence to do the duty it declares. Yet again, the Law was full of "statutes that were not good,"[1] and of laws that were given "for the hardness of their hearts." In modern language, it was the product of an uncompleted evolution. So it is full of adaptations to Israel, and to Israel at a particular stage of development; and every such adaptation was likely to be unsuitable to other nations, or for Israel itself in another stage of development, such as came when the dispersion had driven most of the foreign Jews into trade, and made any accurate observance of the ritual impossible for them. Yet again, the Law was local, national, relative, while the higher teaching of the prophets was universal and permanent; and the antagonism was coming to a crisis in Roman times. The scribes at Jerusalem were crystallizing the one into formalism, while the Jews of the dispersion were evaporating the other into a vague monotheism. Was it possible to check both degenerations, and to decide between the two ideals? Was the old faith of Israel to be stereotyped in Pharisaism, to be lost in the Greek world, or could it burst its bands and become a universal religion?

[1] Ezek. xx 25, referring more or less to an earlier state of things.

Great men and great movements must not be judged simply by what they do, but even more by what they point forward to and help to make possible. It would be folly to judge the French Revolution by the Reign of Terror, or even by its results in France only. So with the Old Testament. We have not done with it when we have weighed its merits and counted up its victories and failures. This imperfect revelation of a God supposed to be perfect was a thing that pointed forward. It held a deeper prophecy than any verification of alleged predictions, deeper even than the convergence of all the threads of ancient history upon the origins of Christianity. The conception of God as holy accounted for the imperfections of the revelation, for perfect holiness cannot be more than imperfectly revealed to men who are not in perfect sympathy with it. But then again, the conception of God as perfect goodness turned every imperfection into a promise and a prophecy of better things to come. Given such a God, the very weakness of the Law was a pledge of hope. And must it not be the same with the shortcomings of all religions which teach that God is perfect?

LECTURE XIV.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Before we can discuss the idea of revelation embodied for us in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, we must glance at the sources from which we get our historical knowledge of him. These are the books of the New Testament, for other writers practically add nothing to them. We have a sentence of Tacitus, an allusion in Suetonius, perhaps a few words in Justin, some Western readings, and sundry scattered sayings of more or less doubtful genuineness—and this is all. If scraps of tradition are included in apocryphal writings, they are hopelessly entangled in romance. Thus our historical knowledge of Christ comes from the books of the New Testament, and our historical conception of him depends on our estimate of their historical trustworthiness. If upon the whole they are more or less authentic, there will be more or less of a case for his divinity; if legendary, he can hardly be more than human. If the story of his resurrection is historically true, it must be the central event of the entire development; if untrue, we can build on it nothing better than æsthetic fancies. If it is true, we can hardly do less than worship him as the Son of God; if false, we cannot do more than admire

him as a man like other men. True or false is a fair issue; the one hopelessly untenable position is that of Keim and others, that such a fact is spiritually none the worse for being historically false. This may seem a tempting half and half position between belief and unbelief; but in fact it gives up the advantages of either without securing those of the other, and it is further essentially immoral. Religious worship of one we believe to be divine may be deplorably mistaken; but an æsthetic worship of one we do not suppose to be in any proper sense divine cannot be other than in the highest degree untruthful and demoralizing.

That there may be no mistake about my own conclusions, I will state them at once. If the Gifford Lecturer is not allowed to assume that alleged miracles are true, neither is he required to assume that they are false. He is at liberty to leave them open questions, as things that may or may not turn out true, but must not be used in argument as if they were true. Reserving, then, this question as in duty bound, my belief is clear and unhesitating, that on all reasonable principles of historical criticism the Four Gospels and the Acts are in the main history and not romance; that they were all five written nearly in their present form within the lifetime of eye-witnesses; and that much of the substance of the Synoptic Gospels was current in *systematized* oral teaching from the very first. If we are to leave open the question of the so-called miraculous, it seems hardly possible to come to any other conclusion. In any case, it is much to be wished that the men who foreclose it by assuming that anything whatever is more likely than

a "miracle," would always explain themselves as frankly as some of them do. I would not lightly speak evil of the school which calls itself critical, and claims a monopoly of historical method; but surely it is misleading to present as results of historical criticism conclusions which are determined beforehand by purely philosophical assumptions, and might just as well have been announced at once without the formality of historical discussion. Assumption for assumption, naturalistic philosophy is no better than ultramontane dogmatism when it is made a similar *præjudicium* to forestall the decision of historical questions by historical evidence.

On the authorship of the Fourth Gospel in particular I cannot see that the arguments of Westcott and Lightfoot need any great modification. To the best of my judgment, they are still unanswered. Dr. Abbott's reply, for instance, is often strangely wide of the mark. An evil-minded reviewer might start a theory that he criticized Lightfoot without reading him, and plausibly defend it with arguments only too familiar to Dr. Abbott himself. "If he had read this or that page of Lightfoot he could not have failed to say something about it." I am afraid it would be as good a theory as some of Dr. Abbott's own. For example, it is really surprising that an English scholar should repeat the arguments of *Supernatural Religion* precisely as if Lightfoot's masterpiece, *The Silence of Eusebius*, had never been written.[1]

[1] Let us see how Dr. Abbott deals with one of the most important questions at issue.

He begins (*Encycl. Biblica*, ii 1810 n.): "Lightfoot proves that

Speaking quite generally, so as to leave behind all personal references, it may be submitted that abundant learning is not always inconsistent with small regard for the probabilities of common sense and human nature. What is to be said, for instance, when the origin of the Gospels is discussed as if the writers were modern literary men with scissors and paste, or German monographists who make it a business to set down every single

Eusebius, *but not that Papias* (*two centuries before*), used the word ἐξήγησις to mean interpretation," — a commentary, not a narrative. The italics are Dr. Abbott's own.

Now, in Lightfoot's *Answer to S.R.* I find a closely reasoned argument, —first, that when Papias, in writing his Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεις, says συγκατάξαι ταῖς ἑρμηνείαις, he means that he was writing a commentary on a text of some sort; second, that Papias contrasts himself with the Gnostics, who were very much more commentators than narrators; third, that if Papias were writing an opposition Gospel, he would not have collected the oral traditions of narrators whose written works he so distrusted; fourth, that of the few traditions of the sort known to us, one ascribed to Papias would seem to be an illustration of a verse of St. John, while a second, which is given as an illustration of another verse, is almost certainly derived from Papias; fifth, that Dionysius of Corinth in the next generation certainly uses ἐξηγήσεις of interpretations.

All this Dr. Abbott passes over in this connexion in as profound silence as if he had never read it.

For his own part, he quotes LXX (a reading of Jud. vii 15), and says that in New Testament too ἐξήγησις is a narrative. There may be some truth in this, though the usage of the LXX is rather the other way (Gen. xli 8, 24, etc.). He then quotes Lucian (a contemporary of Papias), though he allows that the word changed its meaning "both among Christians and among Greeks, when no more oracles were forthcoming." He only touches Lightfoot when he declares that the two clauses of Irenæus I iii_6 παρατρέποντες τὰς ἑρμηνείας, καὶ ῥαδιουργοῦντες τὰς ἐξηγήσεις are *distinguished*, not parallel. Yet the general argument of Irenæus is not that the Gnostics corrupted the Gospels, but that they misinterpreted them. The Latin translator seems to take the clauses as parallel (*convertentes interpretationes et adulterantes expositiones*), and the instance Dr. Abbott himself gives from Irenæus I viii 2, of a Valentinian *misinterpretation* of Joh. xii 27, points the same way.

Can it be said that Dr. Abbott has fairly met Lightfoot's argument?

thing they can find out? Or when the problem is handled without reference to Jewish methods or Christian needs of teaching? Or when a corrupt or misunderstood quotation of Papias—that St. John was killed by the Jews[1]—is preferred to the clear evidence of Irenæus? Or when historical investigation is reduced to a mechanical process which ignores historical surroundings and personal character? Take another sample. Straight after an admission that the writer of the Fourth Gospel shews a considerable knowledge of Jewish institutions, is it common sense to force on absolutely open words the enormous blunder of taking the high priesthood for an annual office? Has the intelligent foreigner, or even the stupid foreigner, ever set down the like about royalty in England? And how about quotations in early writers? They are discussed with infinite learning and ingenuity, but without the smallest regard to ancient or even to modern habits of

[1] Dr. Sanday, *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, 103, treats the matter with his usual candour, and I think with more respect than it deserves.

The authority is Georgius Hamartolus (ninth century), now supported by C. de Boor's Fragment. They cannot be backed up (Schwartz) from Mark x 39, unless it be assumed not only that the passage is a *vaticinium ex eventu*, but that the "cup" spoken of cannot be anything else than a violent death.

On the other hand, it is practically impossible that Irenæus can be mistaken either in the identity of his own master Polycarp's teacher, or in the fact that he lived on into Trajan's time, though he does not shut out the possibility that he was "killed by the Jews" after all.

Dr. Sanday has made it rather a delicate matter for me to press an argument from silence. Yet the silence of Eusebius is of weight, for the statement ascribed to Papias is precisely one of those "statements about" canonical books which he undertook to tell us of, and which he certainly does not fail to give us, so far as we can verify his selections. We might think him specially unlikely to pass over a statement which would have so fully justified his impatience of Papias.

quotation. Schmiedel has a very neat dilemma, which has found much favour with the literary critics. If the words are not precisely what we find in our Gospel, they must have come from some other source: if they are, they must be "winged words" which might have come from anywhere. But the critics are seldom reduced to the "winged words," for a disagreement is easily made by taking another reading or another meaning for the passage. So good a method will bear extension; and some thirty years ago they carried it down to Tatian: but they have dropped it after Justin since the discovery of the Diatessaron, and that in such haste that they never stop to ask what length of past history is implied by Tatian's recognition of the Gospels, and by the state of the text in his time. If some of them will kindly turn their attention for a while from Papias and Justin to Westcott, almost any single page of his writings (the rest supposed lost) will give them abundant proof that he "did not recognize" the Fourth Gospel, or at any rate "attached no authority to it." Abbott and Schmiedel are scholars from whom we would gladly learn, for some of their other work is excellent; but they have shewn small judgment here. "Critical" methods like these will turn any history whatever into romance. As feats of paradox they are altogether admirable; but when they are laid before us as the ripest results of modern historical research, we are compelled to make our protest in the name of truth and sanity against this astounding licence of reckless theorizing, forced interpretations, contempt of evidence, and systematic disregard of common sense.

Indeed, I am inclined to doubt whether stronger literary arguments than these would be quite so conclusive as is often supposed. There is another side of the question which deserves more consideration than it commonly gets. The Gospels profess to give us the picture of a perfect or sinless man in his relations to a great variety of people who come in his way. Good and bad, rich and poor, Greeks, Jews and Romans, are all on the canvas, and we are told how he dealt with each of them. Now Stoics and others who have tried to picture such a man have commonly drawn him at rest, contenting themselves with describing his virtues and his general aims. Very few have attempted the harder task of picturing his life and actions among his fellow-men; and those few, by common consent, are more or less complete failures. But the picture in the Gospels is not a failure. Whether it be quite perfect or not, serious persons of all beliefs are nearly unanimous that no other will bear a moment's comparison with it. It is not a Christian who tells us that it is a safe rule to do what Jesus of Nazareth would have done. Now if we consider well the enormous difficulty of the task—one Shakespeare[1] himself never attempted—I see no escape from the conclusion that whoever drew the portrait, it was drawn from life. Nor does it seem much idealized, for idealizing touches in the account of a good man's conduct are nearly always changes for the worse, as we

[1] It is significant that his nearest approach to it is Cordelia, for of all his great characters she is the one drawn with fewest touches. What we see is exquisite; but we feel that we know very little of her. At best, she is only a silhouette, not a portrait.

see at large in the Lives of the saints. The problem of this portrait is hard enough even if the Gospels depend on the accounts of eye-witnesses; but if they are almost fortuitous collections of legends and scraps and idealized stories, it will be harder still to explain the resulting harmony. Did a kaleidoscope ever turn out a finished portrait?

In case we have to refer to other books of the New Testament, it may be as well to add that I believe thirteen Epistles to be genuine works of St. Paul, while that to the Hebrews belongs to Apollos or some other contemporary; and that the Apocalypse was written by the Apostle John. If we take the Neronian date, its difference from the Gospel is accounted for by distance of time; if a Domitianic, by the hardships of forced labour at Patmos.[1] Of the Catholic Epistles, two seem beyond serious attack, and the others are less important. That of James, however, would seem rather early than late; and Dr. Bigg has shewn that even 2 Peter admits of a fair defence.

Christianity as a system may be divided, after the fashion of the eighteenth century, into an older or Jewish part, and a newer or specifically Christian part. Thus the command, "that ye love one another," is an old commandment which we had from the beginning; but the model and the motive, "as I have loved you," is a new commandment. Taking things in this way, the

[1] Prof. Ramsay's suggestion (*Expos. Times*, xvi 36—for Nov. 1904). But is there any evidence that Domitian's persecution spread to the provinces? I still prefer the Neronian date, though (as with 1 Peter), it may very well be stretched into the earlier years of Vespasian.

Gospel seems to carry over from Judaism the unity of God, the truths of Natural Religion, and the preaching of holiness, while it replaces the sacrificial system with its own doctrine of salvation through Christ. Such a method of analysis has been very common in past ages; and as the dissection of a carcase it is not without its use. But as an account of Christianity in its inner life and proper meaning, it is not only insufficient but misleading. Instead of looking for some principle of unity, it takes the Gospel for a bundle of doctrines, tears in sunder an organic whole, and offers us the empty question, which of the fragments is the larger. There have been men like Marcion, who ignored the Jewish element; and some will say that Origen and Athanasius not only stated Christianity in Greek forms of thought, but seriously changed its meaning by their use of Greek philosophy. But from the time of the Galatians the stronger tendency has been to draw too close its connexion with Judaism, and even to resolve it entirely into a better sort of Pharisaism.

The connexion itself is one of the obvious facts of history. The Gospel sprang up on Jewish soil, its Founder was a Jew, though only a Jew of Galilee; its first preachers were like him, Jews of Galilee; its appeal was to Jewish scriptures, and its claim was to have fulfilled the hope of Israel. Its advance was from Jerusalem outward, its first address in every city was to the Jewish synagogue, and all its early writings are the work of Jewish authors—the Third Gospel and the Acts excepted. But real as the connexion is, it has commonly been overstated in the West, for the Latin thought

which still so largely rules the North is too near akin to Pharisaism to see very clearly those elements of the Gospel which transcend every form of Judaism, and by transcending transfigure even the parts of it which might otherwise be purely Jewish.

In the whole range of literature there is no more brilliant piece of true historic insight than St. Paul's view of Judaism as a mere parenthesis in history. True it is that the Law was waxing old and ready to vanish away, now that the synagogue had replaced the temple as the real centre of religious life even in Judea, and still more among the Jews of the Dispersion. Yet genius—the rare genius of perfect loyalty to truth—was needed to see how completely the traditions of the Pharisees had set aside the Law they worshipped in the place of God. So when the parenthesis came to an end, it was gradually found that the Gospel had quite as real a connexion with the freer covenant of older times, and even that the Spirit of Christ was brooding over the chaos of heathen thought which seemed at first, and still seems to many, to lie so wholly in the power of the Evil One.

Broadly speaking, Jewish particularism, legality, and traditionalism are represented in Christian thought by the religion of the natural man which has always commanded a majority in Christendom, and is deemed authoritative by those who worship majorities for want of a reason for their belief; while the best thought of the East, which had its echoes in the West, and is once more coming to the surface in the North, caught with more success the universal and eternal meaning claimed

for the Lord's Person, not his teaching—as the infinite and final revelation of the truth of this world and the other. Or if I may borrow a classification from my Oxford colleague:[1] to the disciplinarian he is the living bread which came down from heaven once for all in such a year of Cæsar Augustus: to the mystic he is also the bread of God which is ever coming down from heaven, and ever giving life to the whole world. They both confess in him their Lord and Saviour, the conqueror of death and sin; but then they separate. The one looks back to the majestic memory of a revelation given once for all, a faith delivered once for all, a visible church set up once for all, with a sacred trust of laws and ordinances to be maintained against a wicked world. He is the materialist of Christian thought, as firmly convinced as any unbeliever that the Gospel works contrary to Nature and reason. So he looks for its evidence in breaches of natural order, finds the grace of heaven in sacraments and mysteries outside the domain of reason, and waits for salvation in the horrors of the Lord's return, when he shall overthrow like Sodom a world beyond his power fully to redeem. The other lives by a growing revelation and a growing knowledge of an ever-living Person whose kingdom ruleth over all, but only by the appeal of love divine to the image of God in man. He is the idealist of Christian thought, who sees in reason and Nature no mirage of hellish magic, but shadows of the eternal truth incarnate in the

[1] I borrow the classification only from Dr. Bigg, without claiming to represent him in my contrast of the two ideal tendencies.

It is to be noted that in this context *only* I speak of mysticism as it is here defined, and not in any other or more popular sense.

Son of Man. So he looks for the evidence of the Gospel in its revelation of this world's true estate and order, sees the grace of heaven in every work that is done on the wide earth for love and duty, and looks for life eternal here and now, not simply as the future issue of some far off divine catastrophe. In a word, the one believes the Gospel because it contradicts Nature and reason; the other, because That which hath been made, in him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

These are the two great theories of Christianity which have been contending ever since its origin. They are the answers to the ultimate question, whether the Gospel is law or life, whether the Lord's teaching or his Person is its final truth; and therefore they cut straight across the divisions of churches and sects. Yet they are no more than theories, for the disciplinarian and the mystic are as much ideals as the natural man and the spiritual man of St. Paul. No Church is purely disciplinarian, for even Rome has never ventured to stamp out entirely the mystic element; and not even a sect is purely mystic, for the Quakers themselves were not long in discovering that scandals and disorders might come from an unregulated following of the inner light. It is the same with individuals. If most men are disciplinarians, no genuine Christian can be without a trace of mysticism; and if some are mystics, there are none without some admixture of the disciplinarian.

The same division runs through the opponents of Christianity, for they too always take either the disciplinarian or the mystic view of the doctrine they

reject, and often push these views much further than any reasonable Christian. For parts of the Gospel, such as the Sermon on the Mount or the personal character of Jesus of Nazareth, most of them have a respect which is more than conventional; but the Gospel generally some of them are inclined to despise as a silly mystification of unreasoning sentimentality, while the more part condemn it as an unreasonable and unnatural code of law; and sometimes both charges are made at once. In this connexion it is unfortunate that so many of them practically insist on measuring Christianity by the Church of Rome, which lies more open to these charges than any other Church, and indeed is more disposed to make a merit of them than to deny them. It is very shallow to call her "the central, true, and main form of Christianity." She is central only in the geographical sense of lying between the East and the North, for she is no doctrinal link between them. And if she is just now the largest of the sects, that does not establish her claim to be the legitimate exponent of Christian teaching. She was not the largest sect when she schismatically separated from the Holy Orthodox Church of the East; she is even now declining as against the Reformed Churches, and she is likely to sink into a secondary power if she proves unable to win back the English people in Europe and America. Is a religion fairly reckoned with by men who insist on judging it by the most degraded of all its sects? Meanwhile the peculiar hatred of Protestantism which gleams out in such writers as Grant Allen may be taken as an instinctive recognition that they would find in some

forms of it a more dangerous enemy, less encumbered with irrational fable and practical falsehood, and not hindered by any claim of infallibility from abandoning such conceptions of things divine as may prove untenable. Let us therefore go back to the original documents, and see what conceptions of the knowledge of God are set forth in them. We shall have to note their relations to history in all its range; but later interpretations must take their place in the series of historical facts we shall have to deal with.

The first thing we notice is that though Christianity is one of the Founded Religions, it is not connected with its Founder in the same way as Islam or Buddhism. Though Mahomet wrote the Koran, while Jesus of Nazareth left nothing in writing, Mahomet is not the centre of the Koran in the same sense as Jesus Christ is the centre of the New Testament. Mahomet was no more than a prophet who delivered the Koran. Legends might gather round him, but he has never been taken for more than a man; whereas every single writing of the New Testament implies that Jesus was not only man, but also divine in a much higher sense than that in which it is possible to call other men sons of God.

That this is the teaching of St. Paul and of the Fourth Gospel is hardly matter of dispute. To St. Paul he is the Son of God, the image of the invisible God. All things in him were made, and in him consist, and in him shall be summed up again. He was rich, and became poor for our sake, for he was sent in the likeness of flesh of sin, made of a woman, made under the law, and

became obedient unto death, even the death of a cross. He gave himself for us, a ransom for us all, that as he died for all, so all should live to him. Christ is our life: he lives in us, and in him—seventy times over he speaks of being *in him*—we live to God. In him shall all be made alive, and before his judgment seat we must all be manifested.

Now hear the writer of the Fourth Gospel and its postscript—for if ever a book was clearly one and indivisible, it is the Fourth Gospel; and if ever two books proclaimed in every line their unity of authorship, they are the Gospel and Epistle which bear the name of John. In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was divine. In the world he was, and the world knew him not. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father. I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you. I am the light of the world; I am the resurrection and the life. He came in flesh, he laid down his life for us, he is the propitiation for the whole world. The Father hath given all judgment to him, that all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Whatever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it. He that eateth me, even he shall live because of me: and I myself will raise him for the last day.

It is the same picture of a divine Person transcending the world yet immanent in it, now for us men and for our salvation incarnate; and the same picture is more or less fully drawn in every book of the New Testament.

Even in the Epistle of James, where the references are so few, they are words of the lowliest reverence, which point the same way as the rest. The Synoptic Gospels in particular are no exception. There is a difference, of course, and a marked difference, from the style of our Lord's discourses in the Fourth Gospel; but it is exactly the sort of difference we shall find natural if we allow for the change from Jerusalem to Galilee, from the Sanhedrin to the multitude by the seashore. There are links enough between the styles, as there are between the narratives; and it is not safe to assume that the Fourth Gospel diverges further than the Synoptics from the words actually spoken. It may be that the disciple condensed discourses, selected sayings, and to some extent idealized the Master's words, as he may quite well have done without drawing out of them any more than they really meant; but they do not seem to be in any further sense compositions of his own.[1] To those who are willing to consider the sacred deposit those words must have been to the old man who had pondered them for sixty years, and seen, as he tells us, one dark saying after another flashing into brilliant light—to them it may not seem unlikely that the words of spirit and of life called out the disciple's innate idealism, and

[1] For instance x 34 I said, ye are gods, cannot have been invented, for on a surface view it directly contradicts the argument.

Again, if it is a composition of the writer's, why does he not go on, if he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came; say ye of him *who is himself the Word*, Thou blasphemest? This would have been so effective, and so obvious to the writer of the Prologue, that it is difficult to see any reason why he did not set it down, except that Jesus really said something else—and this something, when we look at it carefully, is much less obvious, but even more effective.

moulded his thoughts and language on that side of the Great Master's teaching.

Be that as it may, the Synoptic portrait of Christ is not less divine than the other. Julian blundered sadly when he complimented "the good John" on his invention. To begin at the beginning, John's baptism meant belief in one greater than John, and a promise to hold the Law at the disposal of one greater than Moses.[1] Marvellous as is the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, there is something still more impressive in the speaker's lofty tone of authority. Ye have heard what God said to them of old; but I tell you something better. And this tone is kept up throughout. He is the Son of God, his beloved Son. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knowith the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.[2] Is not this a verse of the Fourth Gospel gone astray? Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He came to fulfil the law—to complete all that the law had left unfinished. He gave his life a ransom for many. Relation to him is the one test of good and bad,—he that is not with me is against me. He is with his disciples all the days to the end of the world; and when he shall come again in his glory, he shall send forth *his*[3] angels, and he shall judge all men, and judge them solely by their works in relation

[1] Baptism was fully understood to mean conversion to a new religion; and the only possible form of such conversion to an orthodox Jew was to hold the Law subject to such changes as the Christ might make.

[2] Mt. xi 27.

[3] Mk. xiii 41, xvi 27, xxiv 31.

to himself. This is the same picture as we find in the Fourth Gospel. The transcendence and therefore the incarnation are quite as plain; and if the immanence is less developed in the Synoptists, their eschatology is fuller than St. John's. There is a difference of emphasis, none of substance.

These are only a few of the passages that might be quoted. It would have been too long to make anything like a complete collection, or even to point out the deeper connexions of these. But take them as they stand. The *primâ facie* inference is evident—that he claimed to be the Son of God in the full Christian sense. If words have meaning, these words are not satisfied by theories which leave him no more than a man. He may be the ideal man, the sinless man, the discoverer of the Father, the man who "has for us the value of God"; but all this falls far short of the claim ascribed to him. We come to higher ground in theories of a union with God formed gradually, or of an impersonal divine principle of humanity incarnate in him. Profoundly suggestive as these views are, and profoundly true (Christians must admit) so far as they go, still the words before us call for something more. If we take them as they stand, he claimed to be nothing less than the Christians take him to be.

But if we cannot cut down the general meaning of the words, may we not explain some of them another way, and cut out the rest as interpolations? This is the endeavour of some recent writers, and it seems rather coming into fashion in Germany. It must be confessed that some of the passages occasionally quoted will fairly

bear a lower sense,[1] and that many can be understood in a lower sense if they are taken without regard to their context; but by far the larger number of them are unassailable on any generally admitted principles of textual criticism. Nor is it on grounds of textual criticism that their genuineness is denied, but on assumptions ultimately philosophical, which have nothing to do with the diplomatic evidence. The case is not one of balanced evidence on which sober critics might fairly disagree, nor always even one of preferring the flimsiest imaginable evidence to the strongest.[2] Well attested clauses are very commonly rejected on no evidence at all, but simply on a *præjudicium*. First they are pronounced "impossible," and then they are rejected in defiance of the whole of the evidence.

Hoc volo, sic jubeo; sit pro ratione voluntas.

It is first assumed as self-evident that one who was man cannot possibly have claimed to be more than a man; then this is bolstered up with the further assumption that the first disciples—all born monotheistic Jews—with one accord went and deified a man who never pretended to be divine—and that in spite of the crushing difficulty of his crucifixion; and for these two assumptions all evidence is summarily set

[1] Thus it would be unsafe to press Mt. xxviii 54, where the centurion by the cross says ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱος ἦν οὗτος. Besides the difficulty of its connexion with the obscure story of the saints which slept, the centurion is more likely to have used the words in a heathen than in a Christian sense, and therefore not to have gone very much beyond Lu. xxiii 47, ὄντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν.

[2] As a sample of reckless criticism, the desperate efforts of Schmiedel, *Encycl. Bibl.* ii 2528, or Conybeare, *Hibbert Journal*, i 112, to draw the sting of Mt. xi 27.

aside.[1] Yet the one plainly begs the question, and the other calls for as robust a faith as the miracle of St. Januarius. Till every single book of the New Testament has been torn to shreds by something more fit to be called criticism, there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth did claim (whether rightly or wrongly we need not ask now) to be in the highest sense the Son of God, and the supreme and final Guide[2] of men.

Nor can it well be doubted that St. Paul believed him to have made such a claim. There is no answer to the contention of Schmiedel and others that some of his Epistles which imply Christ's deity are genuine, and rightly dated in the time of Nero. And there is also no answer to van Manen's argument, that born Jews could not in less than thirty years have deified outright a man who was crucified. Some would relieve the moral difficulty by dating Jesus of Nazareth about a century earlier; but this course only increases the historical difficulty, for they have to set aside Tacitus as well as the New Testament. Perhaps their most prudent course is to leave the difficulty unsolved, or to reply with Harnack, that the whole question of the Person of Christ is illegitimate, and ought not to be asked. Even then I fear the Christians will not cease to flatter themselves that their own solution is the simplest after all.

We start, then, from the position that as a matter of

[1] This seems to me a fair account of Schmidt's method in his art. "Son of God," *Encycl. Bibl.* His conclusion is plainly independent of the historical evidence.

[2] Mt. xxiii 10 καθηγητής.

fact Jesus of Nazareth made the claim ascribed to him, and that his disciples fully believed him. This claim cannot be dismissed as an aftergrowth of legend, for the Third Gospel states what the Acts and St. Paul confirm, that the current belief of Christians was not of recent origin, and St. Paul delivers plain testimony that his view of Christ as God was no discovery of his own, but substantially the teaching of Christian teachers, and the belief of Christian men from the first. The choice remains open between imposture, delusion, and sober truth; but the legend theory, which alone directly concerns us, may be set aside as a greater miracle than the resurrection. The theory that Jesus himself made such a claim explains at least the first broad facts, whereas the legend theory breaks down at once and hopelessly upon them.

Now, what was the general idea of revelation current among the Christians during the twenty years or so before the destruction of Jerusalem? We have ample material before us. We may cite ten of St. Paul's Epistles, that to the Hebrews and the first of Peter as strictly contemporary, the Synoptic Gospels as embodying the systematic teaching of the generation before they were written, and the Acts as a fairly true picture of early opinion. I omit the Pastoral Epistles in order to avoid disputed evidence, and the Fourth Gospel because Johannine teaching hardly became conspicuous till after the fall of Jerusalem. Many times, however, the views of other writers are most conveniently summed up in a phrase of St. John.

As the nucleus of the Christian Churches was Jewish,

they began by accepting the Jewish scriptures as authoritative. The Jewish influence, indeed, was at first very strong. One party wanted to go back to circumcision, and another found a very lofty revelation in the gibberish of tongues. St. Paul, it is true, stands above all this with his clear belief that revelation must be reasonable, and that in Christ it has got quite beyond the stage of Judaism. But St. Paul figures more largely in the New Testament itself than he did in New Testament times. It is evident from the nature of the case and from the remains of subapostolic times that his teaching was very imperfectly understood. Thus if there is a simple fact about revelation which he earnestly presses on the Corinthians, it is that the prophet speaks in his sober senses and not in ecstasy; yet the general belief of Christians made prophecy ecstatic till the excesses of Montanism compelled them to amend it. His doctrine of faith was never seriously reckoned with before Augustine, if not before the Reformation, and perhaps we are only now beginning to see what he meant by election. It is a mistake always, and in the apostolic age a specially disastrous mistake, to measure average men by the great leaders of thought.

But the spirit of the community was never Jewish, and every year more and more estranged them from the national ideals of Israel. The principle of circumcision was given up at the apostolic conference, and the breach was completed when the Christians left the city to its fate at the opening of the war with Rome. If the Old Testament was divine, it was not supreme as in Israel. Jesus of Nazareth had not only changed the

Law, but ended it.[1] The old dispensation seemed to converge on Christ, and to speak of Christ in every detail. All mysteries were now explained in Christ. No men ever saw more vividly the unity there must be in a true revelation. If Christ was what they took him for, they could not help believing that the entire past, not of Israel only but of the world, must lead up to him. The philosophy of history outlined by St. Paul to the Romans and the Ephesians expresses the belief less clearly held by common Christians, that the meaning of Christ's Person is for all creation in the widest range of space and time.

Thus they no more set aside the revelation of the Old Testament than that had set aside the revelation through nature; only, they subordinated it to one they saw more and more clearly to be made in Christ's Person, not simply in his teaching. Marvellous as that teaching was, the teacher's claims were still more marvellous. Their constant practice of turning every detail of the Old Testament to Christ means nothing less than the doctrine of the Fourth Gospel, that the personal Word of God is the ever-present background of all revelation—that all the words of God which were spoken in divers parts and in divers manners were so many fragments of the truth which formed a perfect whole in Christ.

This, in fact, is the distinctive doctrine of Christianity—that the revelation in Christ's Person sums up all the rest. Islam and Pharisaism sum up revelation in a book, Christianity in a Person. And is not this the

[1] Rom. x 4 : *τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χρ.*

higher view? Is not a sinless man, if such there be, a higher revelation of God than any teaching of a book? We have seen that such a man—sense and finiteness notwithstanding—is a true and flawless image of God, for sin includes everything that is contrary to the divine. Expression for expression, a living person is a higher expression of the divine than any book. Were the teaching of the book as such ever so perfect of its kind, it would still be finite, whereas life is infinite; and if teaching has living power, it gets it at second hand from the teacher, whereas the living Person appeals direct to persons. The difference between personal influence and mere teaching is the difference between faith and law: for what St. Paul calls faith is nothing else than the personal influence of Christ; and the personal influence of the greatest man in history must be a power that can touch the springs of action, whereas law is dead. The categorical imperative of duty may be as majestic as the snowy mountain peaks, but it is as cold and inaccessible till one of our fellow-men has shewn us the way. The Stoics felt the weakness of bare duty, and tried to put it in a personal form by drawing pictures of the perfect man; but the Christians believed that the perfect man had lived among them. They had no need to draw imaginary pictures: only let them follow Christ, and walk as he walked.

They rightly saw that revelation is in life and not in knowledge, or more precisely, that knowledge which is not worked out in life is not true knowledge at all. It is only that which puffeth up. As Butler would say, it gives only passive impressions which grow weaker by

being repeated upon us. Untruth is ruinous because it is to our moral system like a foreign substance lodged in the body, and truth itself is no better till will has assimilated it, as well as mind and feeling. Mere orthodoxy is none the less poison if the doctrine chances to be true. Therefore the convert was required before all things to purify his life. The gods were content with ceremonial purity, and even the mysteries were satisfied with respectability; but the Christians called for a new life, with a clear separation from idolatry of every sort and from open sin; and upon the whole, they seem to have obtained it. There were scandals enough, for there never was a golden age of the Church; but after all reasonable allowances, it is clear that the early Christians lived on a much higher moral plane than the Jews and heathens around them. They were lights in the world, even if some of them were dim.

It may be granted at once that an unpopular sect can maintain a higher moral standard than a fashionable Church which receives all comers; but it cannot do this unless it backs up its discipline by a suitable training of its members. Mere severity may brace up a society to spasmodic efforts, but it is soon relaxed if it is not the outcome of the system. Now, the peculiarity of Christian teaching as it appears in the New Testament and early writers generally is the large historical element it contained. The alleged facts of the life of Jesus of Nazareth were systematically taught to catechumens, and systematically impressed on the faithful in the religious meetings, and great stress was laid on the duty of imitating him, or (as St. John sums it up

for us) of "walking as he walked." It was fully understood to be the one necessary and sufficient duty of Christian men. If Christ was indeed "the image of the invisible God," knowledge of Christ was knowledge of God. This then was the early theory of Christian training—that the one thing needful is to bring men under the direct personal influence of Christ, and that the Church exists for no other purpose. It was obscured in the Middle Ages by theories of mediation with Christ; but Protestantism, and in particular the system of the English Church, shews a marked return to it.

LECTURE XV.

THE EARLY CHURCH.

We shall not for a long time need to look beyond Christian conceptions of the knowledge of God. The ancient local or national worships were doomed when the Empire had crushed the ancient world of nations; yet neither was the Empire able to bring forth a universal religion. Christianity was for centuries the one creative power in the world. Islam was only a debased sort of Judaism, and even the genius of Plotinus could not do much more than shuffle and reshuffle old material. Christianity alone laid new facts and thoughts before the world, and therefore took the lead in the third century, and has since remained supreme.

With all its complexity of detail, the long history before us has a clear and simple ontline. It followed a logical course, and may be grouped round its four great controversies of Gnosticism, Arianism, the Reformation, and the Scepticism of our own time. Of these the first and second were dealt with by the Greeks, while the third and fourth belong to the Teutonic age of Christian thought. More precisely, the first thing the Christians had to do was to settle against the Gnostics the general character of the revelation as historical and not specu-

lative—to lay down, in short, its broadest outlines. After this came naturally the fuller definition of its central doctrine of the Person of Christ. It was ruled against the Arians that no salvation could be looked for from a being not in the fullest sense divine; and the next centuries were spent in working out the relation of this to the other fact of his perfect manhood.

By this time the work of the Greeks was done. They had brought Theology (in the strict sense of the word) to a point so far in advance of other knowledge that it was isolated, and could get no further till other studies gained strength to make good their relation to it. As they could not do this in the confusion of the earlier Middle Ages, there came a long arrest of progress. Religious thought turned away from the central question of the Person of Christ to the state of man: and this is where the Latins did their best work. This falls into two periods, with a wide interval between. Augustine discussed it as an isolated question, or in relation to the eternal purpose; Anselm and Abelard, followed by the schoolmen, brought it into closer connexion with Christ by new theories of the Atonement.

In this second period we see a clear Teutonic influence, and the Teutonic influence became supreme when the question of the method of the Atonement passed into that of its practical working. Is there given in this life an immediate and personal knowledge of God, or can we know him only at second-hand, so that revelation is simply a tradition of the Church? This was the question of the Reformation. But by the time the doctrine of justification was fully settled it was also

buried under a vast accumulation of Protestant scholasticism. Men turned to the simpler aspects of religion, and therefore came on deeper questions than ever. By this time also Nature had been rediscovered in the Renaissance, and the abatement of the religious wars left room for the growth of science. So the Deists threw down the question—What precisely does revelation mean? and for the last two hundred years religious thought has been centred on it. Is revelation possible? If so, what conception of it are we to form? Does current religion express that conception? If not, what changes will be needed? These are the questions of our own time; and there is reason to believe that they will force us to take up again the work which the Greeks left unfinished. There is clearly something in the fancy of the Christians, that all roads lead to Christ. Be the Gospel true or false, he is more than ever the central problem of history, on which its great questions converge; and we cannot hope to discern its meaning or its goal unless we see him in his true relation to the course of the ages.

It has always been agreed by Christians[1] that Jesus of Nazareth was a divine Person, the embodiment of perfect holiness and perfect goodness, and that his coming down to live and die for men is the decisive and final instance and assurance of both, so that his Person sums up all revelation: and it is further agreed that

[1] I leave out of account some modern theories which make out that the first Christians regarded him as no more than a man. Such theories contradict all the evidence we have to go upon, and can hardly be made even plausible except to those who start from the axiom that his divinity *could* not be believed by men who had personally known him.

while this Person may be apprehended in life by common powers of feeling, thought, and will, the full intellectual comprehension of him exceeds the highest powers of men who are not in perfect sympathy with him. It is a mystery that may be practically known by anyone, theoretically comprehended by none. Now, before we ask how far Christian thought in different ages has worthily carried out the Christian conception of revelation, let us glance over the different ways in which men have fallen short of it. They are very much mixed up in practice, but in a general way they seem to fall into three great classes.

In the first place, there is the old danger of forgetting the difference between magic and religion. This is well seen in *ex opere operato* views of sacraments, or in the battery theory of prayer; but it is not less real in every sort of idea that we can win favour with God by doing this or that, as distinct from being this or that—by works apart from character, or, as St. Paul put it, by works without faith.

Again, popular Christianity commonly retains traces of the polytheism which went before it. Many of these are harmless enough, like the names of the days of the week; and many others are trifling—rather meaningless customs than real superstitions; but some survivals are very mischievous. Thus the Church of Rome carries over from paganism the legal and ritualistic conception of religion, and its worship of saints differs from that of the old gods only in a change of name and a partial change of the legends connected with them.

But these are no more than illustrations of a more

general failure, for Christian belief has usually come far short of the Christian conception acknowledged by all. Thus the deity of Christ has upon the whole been held more firmly than his manhood. Even Athanasius discusses him entirely as a theological Person, never I think otherwise referring to incidents of his life; and the worship of saints in later times is clear proof that he was not then seriously regarded as a man. The Reformation rediscovered his manhood, and in our own times it has been studied more than it ever was before, though there are still some who call in divine action at every difficulty, as if a perfect man had no more power than we have. In another direction the Church of Rome has fundamentally altered the Christian conception, by placing a sinless woman alongside of him and practically above him.

Similarly, though the idea of divine holiness has perhaps been better realized in Christian thought than that of goodness, even this has been much debased by sundry schemes for bribing God, as in the unending superstitions generated by the doctrine that almsgiving is a ransom for sin. Equally debasing is an easy trust in priestly absolution, with small regard to moral amendment. More subtle is the whole system of lying for God, from the glossing of inconvenient facts to the use of arguments we do not know to be true. In fact, God's holiness is more tampered with in the private sophistry of the individual than in the public beliefs of churches.

As touching goodness, though no persons professing belief in Christ can well go the length of declaring

God implacable, some have come very near it. At one end of the scale are the inhuman and demoralizing penances of the early Church: at the other is the lurking fear of all ages that God will not forgive sin without taking satisfaction for it in horrible torments of remorse. If, indeed, forgiveness only means that God will some day miraculously reverse for us the natural consequences of our actions, he may possibly be in this way persuaded to do it; but if it means the restoration of right relations to the order of things, then the one thing clear about it is that whatever mediation or atonement may be necessary, a God of perfect goodness can require from us no more than that we should cease to be rebels and become new men, accepting any conditions without which we cannot become new men. Yet again, perfect goodness cannot be partial. It is consistent with a choice of men to privilege of any sort as a call to work and responsibility; but not with such a choice of some by baptism or election as leaves the rest a whit less truly cared for than those chosen. Whatever work of goodness is carrying on here, there must be a work of similar goodness elsewhere, though it need not be a similar work of goodness. Yet it is evident that the goodness is very commonly supposed to be partial. The higher view has always been in the background, but current religion has commonly kept it in the background. Yet even Natural Theology ought to have been a sufficient reminder that if Christ died for men at all, he must have died for all men.

Other shortcomings are more directly connected with

the historical form of Christianity. The revelation is held to be in a Person, of whom a book is the record, and the church is a witness.[1] Now, it is easy so to mistake this as practically to make the book or the church the revelation, forgetting that its only value is as the record or a witness. Then truth and right and common sense will usually be subjected either to an unreasoning literalism of book-worship, or even more disastrously to an unreasoning traditionalism of church-worship, which may reach, as in the Church of Rome, wilful and explicit disobedience to Christ. Then in the opposite direction there are men who undervalue the book, and give themselves up to religious or literary fancies; and men who undervalue the church, and make any trifle an excuse of conscience for causing division.

This is a formidable catalogue of the shortcomings we shall find; and every one of them debases not only practical religion generally, but the conception of revelation in particular. But be it noted that they are shortcomings. They discredit Christianity in the same sense as the incompetence of doctors or lawyers discredits medicine or law—and in no other. So much the worse for the men; but clear thought and common justice require us to judge a teaching on its own merits and its own evidence, and not by the demerits of men who plainly do not worthily represent it.

There is no steeper descent in history than that which directly follows the apostolic age. We pass at once from writings unsurpassed in creative power to writings of

[1] Not the only witness. Acts v 31 more accurately gives the Christian position. The outward witness is useless without the inward.

marked intellectual poverty. The historian will take them all into account; but the distinction commonly made between the books of the Canon and the rest is fully justified by the enormous difference of character and suggestiveness between, say, Clement and St. Paul, or Barnabas and the writer to the Hebrews. In fact, the Christian literature of the subapostolic age is intellectually below that of any period following it, as far as the death of Augustine. Nor were its chief writers unconscious of the difference. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp—each of them expressly contrasts himself with "the good apostles", as Clement calls them, and deliberately ranks himself at a level far below them.

Yet we must not undervalue the subapostolic age. If it produced no great thinkers, it did a great work of organization, and thinkers appeared in plenty when they were wanted a little later. Meanwhile the most urgent need of the time was to fix the Christian teaching in a permanent form, embodied in canonical books and witnessed by organized churches; and this was a work which chiefly needed single-hearted faithfulness, and beyond it rather administrative skill than depth of thought. This may be one reason for the weight so early given to the wise counsel of the Roman Church. However, it was no mean success to fix the chief part of the Canon, to sum up the teaching in short forms, and to bring into order the weak government which remained when the two great apostles were cut off. There must have been a great moral power in the moderation of Clement, the intense conviction of Ignatius, the stedfastness of Polycarp, and in the simple

piety of the *Teaching*; and, after all, character is a greater force in the world than intellect.

They kept the deposit well; but they would have kept it even better if they had tried more to understand it. Their hearts are full of Christ, their words are crowded with apostolic memories; but they do not stop to make sure of their own meaning. Why should they? Every Christian writer of the first three centuries (Polycarp and Origen excepted) seems to have been a convert; and converts are more often won by particular attractions than by the doctrine as a whole. One man hailed with delight its pure and lofty monotheism, another its message of forgiveness, another its promise of life eternal; while others were won over by their experience of Christian life in its truth and purity, in its gracious kindliness, or in its heroic constancy. So even if the core of their religion was thoroughly Christian, ways of thinking which were not plainly contrary to the Gospel remained very much as they were before. To one man it was the best philosophy, to another the one effective remedy for sin, to another the most imposing of the mysteries that promised immortality, to another merely the one escape from hell-fire; and the first attraction of new teaching for the inquirer commonly remains its chief attraction for the convert.

If, then, all lower revelations were summed up in Christ, they were by no means abolished, and often indeed seemed little changed by their subordination to the higher. The convert retained his old ideas of natural religion and moral duty, of Jewish law and Greek

philosophy, so far as he was not expressly required to renounce them; and as they were more easily placed in formal subordination to the Gospel than worked into organic connection with it, they largely controlled its interpretation. Though the churches were Greek in the subapostolic age, or fast becoming Greek, the Greek spirit had not yet had time fully to assert itself, so that the tendency was still rather Jewish than Greek, in spite of the quarrel with the Jews. The subapostolic Fathers are too much inclined to view the Gospel as the royal law and nothing more. They are as clear as possible on their duty to Christ as Lord and Saviour—on that they never waver for a moment; but they did not quite see how much it meant. How should they? If Judaism had been foiled in its attempt to maintain the Law and degrade Christ into a mere prophet, it still dominated the conception of revelation, and largely shaped common life with fastings and such-like observances which Christ might have commanded and did not.

In passing away from the subapostolic age, we notice at once one of the most impressive facts of early church history. As soon as men had time to collect their thoughts about Christ and begin to put them in a systematic form, they were more inclined to doubt the manhood which had lived among them than the deity they had spiritually known. Gnosticism marks the middle of the second century more characteristically than Ebionism its beginning. If the Jewish converts, like the Latins after them, turned the Gospel into a law, the Greeks made it a philosophy centred on a divine person, for they nearly always meant him to be divine,

even when their conception of divinity fell far short of ours, as it notably did in Arianism. The Greeks were used to gods of all sorts, and had no difficulty in confessing Jesus of Nazareth as the greatest of them. Their doubt was not the Jewish, Because thou being a man makest thyself God, but rather, as the Gnostics might have put it, Because thou being divine makest thyself a man. This would seem always to have been the deeper doubt of the Eastern mind. Arianism is very shallow compared with the thought of Apollinarius, and the Monophysites gave much more trouble than the Nestorians. And as we look down the ages we shall find that this has always been the deeper and more obstinate doubt of serious thinkers. Even in the shallow popular thought of our time it comes out in current ideas of miracle, the Lord's Supper, and other questions. In truth, it is much easier to see why one who is man should not be divine than why one who is God should not be human. In the one case the difficulty meets us at once in common-sense questions about finite and infinite; in the other it is masked by the common-sense notion that God can do all things, inconsistencies included; and the worst of it cannot even be approached without a more real sense of sin than is common among hasty thinkers and critics of the literary sort,—for if the fact of sin is overlooked the most learned of the critics is not likely to see much more of the matter than the most ignorant of the vulgar.

Gnosticism was the first great wave of Greek thought in the churches, but of Greek thought so far gone from its classical models that we might almost as well set it

down as Oriental. Greece was as subject to the inroads of Oriental thought as Italy to those of northern armies; and the Gnostics must take their place in the series with Dionysus, the mysteries, and the Stoics before them, and the Neoplatonists after them. But the word Oriental must not be taken here in any strict geographical sense, or as denoting any particular system of philosophy. It rather sums up ways of thinking which are found well developed in the East, but which may appear in any age and country, so that their presence at any time in Greece or elsewhere may be due rather to parallel development than to direct intercourse with the East.[1]

Gnosticism is not properly Christian at all. It is the orientalized Greek thought of the time taking the idea (not the historical fact) of redemption through Christ as a useful addition to its own cosmogony. Like some systems of our time, it proposed to secure what is valuable in the Gospel by taking ideas from it and explaining away its historical facts; but the result in those days was a cosmogony; in ours it is a code of ethics. The likeness is as characteristic as the difference. Some such attempt was to be expected. Philosophy, like religion, was willing to canonize the Galilean, but not to worship him as the Christians did, and was no more likely than the Empire frankly to accept the "barbarian teaching" till there was no escape.

[1] This important point is best brought out by E. Caird, *Religion in Gk. Phil.* ii 162–183. The thought here called Oriental is as much grounded in human nature, and therefore as cosmopolitan, as any other that might be named.

Gnosticism therefore started with a general Oriental temper and the Christian idea of redemption, and its different systems are distinguished and may be classified by a further Jewish or Greek or Christian element, as the case may be. As regards the idea of revelation, the Gnostics were so far Christian that they accepted the books of the New Testament as sacred. Marcion, indeed, limited himself to the Third Gospel (criticized "with a penknife") and ten Epistles of St. Paul, while some others quoted "apocryphal" or esoteric books; but in the main they were fairly orthodox on this question. The more moderate of them also accepted the Old Testament with the important reserve that the God of the Jews was not the Supreme, but a subordinate creator, of lower rank than Christ the redeemer.

But given a revelation in the books, how was it to be got out of them? In that age they took fright less at physical miracles than at the moral miracle of wrong actions with a confessedly divine sanction. As a literal interpretation, especially of the Old Testament, led to scandals like those of Homer, there seemed no choice but to turn them into allegory. This was indeed the best thing to be done, till it was better understood that a revelation must take men as it finds them, and lift them gradually to higher thoughts. So heathens, Gnostics, and Christians were generally agreed to interpret their own sacred books allegorically (refusing the like liberty to others), though each class contained some austere literalists like Marcion. Thus they not only got rid of the scandals, but read into Homer or the Bible whatever philosophy or cosmogony they found convenient. The

Gnostics found the parables in particular admirable summaries of their endless genealogies, while every detail of the narrative was full of mysteries which none but spiritual men like themselves could discover. But ordinary Christians demurred to this. Common men took fright at this Gnostic demonstration that a sacred book means neither more nor less than what we please to make it mean ; and those who were not carried away by the panic could not help seeing that a limit must be put to the use of allegory if the very idea of a revelation was not to be lost. But if they could neither forbid it nor regulate it on critical principles, they could only cut away the worst of the evil by requiring that some regard should be had to the general drift of Scripture, and specially that there should be no tampering with the main historical facts of the Gospel conveniently set forth in the rules of faith, or later in creeds. Irenæus and the Alexandrians took their stand on these as facts and as essentials, while the Gnostics turned them into types and parables of their own cosmogonies. Allegory remained dangerously free ; but the abuse of it which altogether confounded facts and fancies was checked.

If Gnosticism seemed to approach Christianity by its use of Christian sacred books, its deeper principles were not less hostile than those of the philosophers. When the Gnostics placed evil in matter, they wove it into the structure of the universe, and made it impossible for man to escape from it without ceasing to be man. Salvation was deliverance from matter, and therefore only for the few who were able by ascetic observances (or in some schools by shameless vice) to break the yoke of matter.

Christianity went deeper, consecrating matter by its doctrine of an incarnation and allowing no real evil in the world except sin; but in so doing it opened out an escape for man as man, and therefore for all men. There is a plain reason why all men cannot be ascetics, but there is no such reason why all men should not forsake sin. The Gnostic's conception of revelation is a cosmogony imposed on the sacred books by his own fancy; the Christian looked to them as the record of a Person whose influence would give him strength to break the yoke of sin.

The next writer who claims attention from our point of view is Justin. He shows us Christianity viewed as a philosophy, but not turned into philosophy, as it was by the Gnostics. Justin's is a strangely simple mind to meet among the philosophers. He takes the Gospel just as he finds it, and sets forth his plea that it is excellent philosophy. So full is he of its historic facts, that we can put together the substance of the Synoptists from his allusions. But his characteristic thought is nearer to St. John. As a philosopher, he looks back on history, and cannot help seeing that the Gentile world had not been entirely given over to the crafts and seductions of the demons who bewitched men with idolatry, and stirred them up to slay their betters. It could shew "Christians before Christ" in Socrates, Heraclitus, and any others who had lived according to reason and borne witness against idolatry. The philosophers might have stolen good things from Moses and the prophets; but at all events they had the good things, howsoever they got them. There were even Gentile prophets like Hystaspes

and the Sibyl. Now how was this? There was but one possible answer. The divine Reason which was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth must have been working in the world in past ages, and giving light to all who sought to live according to reason.

Justin's view reminds us of St. John's. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not: and from this verse he may have got further assurance of it, for he certainly used the Fourth Gospel, and there is no reason to suppose that he valued it less than the others. So he has a broad view of inspiration. No doubt he tells us that we cannot recognize divine truth, either by nature or by thought, and that the words of inspired men are not their own, but given them by the divine word which moves them, and acts on just men as a plectrum on a harp or a lyre. This is the simile of the Montanists and Athenagoras, but his conception is not really mechanical. Instead of adding like the Montanists, "The man sleeps, but I wake, saith the Spirit which estranges men from themselves," or saying, like Athenagoras, that the prophet does not reason, but speaks in ecstasy, Justin firmly maintains that the teaching of the Word is not given indiscriminately, but to those who wish to know the true religion; and to this teaching he refers all the purer thought of men of all nations who revolted from idolatry, and sought for truth as he himself had done in past time. This is already the outline of the Alexandrian position, and stands in sharp contrast to the Western bigotry which saw nothing but evil outside the visible Church. Theophilus of Antioch speaks in much the same way of

the nature of inspiration, though with more emphasis on the prophet's freedom, while he drops the broader view of the Word's teaching among the Gentiles. Tatian retains this, though he does not discuss the nature of inspiration; but Athenagoras is a thorough-going Montanist in the matter.

The school of Alexandria stands for a conception of revelation in many respects higher than any we shall meet again till some time after the Reformation. If we could forget the vast substructure built up by the Nicenes, the Latins, and the Reformers, we might almost say that the conception of revelation takes a leap straight from the Alexandrians to the Cambridge Platonists, if not to the developments of the nineteenth century. Onesided as such a statement would be, and grossly misleading if extended to Christian doctrine generally, it still contains an element of truth which needs to be put forward, for the Alexandrians moved among those deepest questions of the philosophy of religion which have never come fully to the front again till our own time, and now appear in much ripened forms, Latins and Reformers spoke much of God, but more of what he has than of what he is; they debated the seat of authority, but not its nature; and all their systems began with man as a sinner, instead of going back to the image of God in him. Hardly any but a few northerners appear to have seen that if the incarnation be true at all it must be for us men, and not simply for our salvation. The Nicenes indeed saw that the Person of Christ involves, and in fact is, the central question; but they took it one side only, outlining its theoretical truth

and caring comparatively little what manner of man he was. There are deep thoughts for still future ages to work out in most of the Greek thinkers, from Irenæus to Apollinarius; but they could not be developed before Latins and Reformers had cleared up many other questions, and prepared the way for a sounder criticism and exegesis. Only in the Alexandrians the highest elements of Greek philosophy in its best age seem quickened into fresh life by the touch of Christianity.

They had such advantages for their work as we never find again till modern times. They had first of all the settled order of the Roman peace. Alexandria saw no foreign enemy between Octavian and the generals of Chosroes,[1] and seems to have had no great internal troubles for a long time before Caracalla's massacre in 217. The civilization of Roman times was of a very modern type, with freer intercourse, fewer obstacles of language, more general education, and greater uniformity of culture in the educated classes, than we meet with again before the middle of the nineteenth century. Alexandria in particular summed up the whole world as a Greek city on Egyptian soil, with Roman officials and a large colony of Jews, and with a vast commerce reaching from Spain to Coromandel. She had many a great corn ship sailing into Italy, and many a merchantman carried by the monsoons to India. Philosophy and Literature flourished from the first, round the great Library and the college of the Museum. The succession of Eratosthenes and Aristarchus, who between them almost summed up all ancient learning, was worthily

[1] Unless we count Zenobia a foreigner.

continued by heathens and Christians alike, and only died out with John Philoponus in the sixth century. So long was Alexandria a chosen home of learning.

Moreover, there was a great difficulty. The later Greek philosophy had come to a stop in its theology, because it could not reconcile God's transcendence with his activity in the world. If he must not touch it himself, he must have a mediator of some sort to put him in connexion with it. But of what sort? In the Timæus of Plato the Soul of the World partakes of both the ideal and the material world. Some of the later Jews tried to fill the gap with angels, and many of the later philosophers imagined the demons to be ministers on earth of the Supreme. But Philo took up the Stoic doctrine of divine forces working in the world, and identified them with the Platonic ideas. Then he gathered them all up in the Logos, which is the mind and will of God, the creator and indwelling sustainer of the world. The conception was more Platonic and Stoic than Jewish, though it has points of contact with the Old Testament and with the Mediating Word of the Targums. But was the Logos divine or creature, attribute or person? Philo wavers helplessly. Sometimes "he draws a noble picture of the Word standing between the creature and the Father, the messenger of divine order and the inspirer of human hope";[1] and sometimes again he flounders amongst abstractions. There was no escape from the dilemma, that if the Logos is divine, he is a second God; and if not, then God acts for himself after all. Philo was too good a Jew to

[1] Westcott on Hebr. viii 6.

get out of it by making the Logos a secondary God of the Arian sort; so he faces both ways, covers his confusion with a cloud of words, and leaves the question unsettled. The one thing clear and certain was that the Logos could not be in any true sense human.

A great difficulty is a great opportunity. Philo made a real advance when he gathered the indefinite mediation into the hand of a single mediator; but there was no getting over the difficulty, that a purely transcendent God must have a mediator to deal with the world, and yet neither a divine mediator nor a created mediator is consistent with such transcendence. Then comes St. John, starting not from the Greek side, but from the Jewish מאמרא ד״ —so that the Logos is not so much the reason of God as his medium of communication with men—and sets the philosophers at defiance one and all by his witness that the Logos was made man, and dwelt among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Supposing, as the Christians did, that this was true, it was plainly a new fact of paramount significance, and all the old questions of philosophy and history would now have to be reconsidered in the new light it threw upon them.

This was the problem the Alexandrians found before them. As usual, the Gnostics were first in the field; but as usual, they did their work so badly that it was more hindrance than help. They simply fitted the incarnation into a place in the old schemes of cosmogony, without clearly seeing that if it is true at all, it must be paramount. This the Christians did see; and the result was a panic. What else was to be expected? The Gnostics were the critics of the time, and their

industry was of the German sort. It is all as modern as it can be. The simpler folk would now have nothing to do with philosophy, and counted learning generally little better than a hindrance to piety. Clement has to apologize for setting pen to paper. His neighbours were very like the narrow churchmen of two or three generations ago, with the same reality, the same charity, the same love of long services, the same strange enthusiasms, the same timid clinging to rule, the same cowering terror of every unfamiliar thought. They were Christians forsooth, not philosophers. Had not the apostle spoken meanly of the wisdom of the world, and warned them against philosophy and vain deceit?[1] Celsus makes the Christians say, "Do not examine: only believe. Learning is a bad thing. The greater the fool, the grosser the sinner, the better the convert he makes." If these words are a slander on Christianity, they do no great injustice to the Orthodoxasts of Alexandria. Yet after all, these ignorant men could shame the philosophers by their example in times of persecution or pestilence; but the mystic narrowness of their determination to know nothing but Christ crucified was not favourable to a worthy view even of Christ.

Clement could deal fairly with this narrow fear, for he saw that there was reason in it. The Orthodoxasts were not entirely wrong, for there was a real danger, then as now, of sinking historical facts in philosophy. He therefore secures their supremacy at the outset by his definition of philosophy. He means by it no partic-

[1] Col. ii 8, but not fairly quoted. As Hort points out, it is τῆς φιλοσοφίας—*the* philosophy—asceticism.

ular system, but all doctrines of any school "which teach righteousness and scientific knowledge of piety."[1] He is himself eclectic. His idea of God is almost as much Platonic as Christian, his doctrine of the Logos is deeply coloured by Philo, and his morality floats between Christian love and Stoic *ἀπάθεια*.

In fact, Clement is anything rather than a great man, if greatness requires a clear and definite system worked out with logical thoroughness. In this respect he will not compare with the Latins, with Cyprian for example, whose work is always "definite teaching," whatever else it be. Clement is often hazy, and not very logical, sometimes giving downright contradictory opinions. He is a student and a mystic, not a statesman like Cyprian. He has a harder task, too, for his thoughts are incomparably deeper and harder to combine. A logical system is easily constructed by forcing everything into subordination to a single dogma. Any sect can do as much as this; and the narrower the shibboleth, the better it serves the purpose. The difficulty begins when we try to grasp the many-sided mystery. Words and thoughts break down, and the vail of sin is over us. The highest truth may be lived, but it cannot be fully stated in logical form. Narrow thought may be perfectly clear; but on the noblest a summer haze must always rest. The logical completeness of a system merely shews that its author was not only ignorant like Socrates, but ignorant of his ignorance like meaner men.

For true philosophy—he does not count the ungodly Epicureans and such-like "tares"—Clement has the

[1] P. 338 P.

profoundest respect. Even where he does not follow Plato, he holds him "something like inspired," and never criticizes him. Plato himself never held more firmly the supremacy of truth, and few Christian writers for many ages after him so clearly saw the unity of truth in all its range. "The way of truth," says he, "is one; and into it as a never-failing river flow the streams on either side."[1] This is Plato, if you will, but Plato touched with new life by one who called himself The way and the truth and the life. We cannot go wrong, says Clement, if we refer all good things to Providence, whether they be Christian or heathen. Now philosophy is good, for it makes men good: therefore it comes from God. To deny this is almost to deny particular providence, and to make the devil more benevolent than God. True, the Law was given direct from heaven; but philosophy was equally given by God, though it was given indirectly, in the way of consequence from the primary gift of reason. It was given to the Greeks, as the Law was given to the Jews, as a training and a preparation for the Gospel, so that it was a real revelation and a justifying covenant with God,—and gave them a true knowledge of him, even if it were a dim knowledge. And as common studies help towards philosophy, their mistress, so does philosophy itself help towards wisdom; for wisdom is the knowledge of things divine and human, and their causes. So Clement agrees with the Gnostics that the Gospel may be presented in a philosophical form. The true Gnostic, says he, must be a man of learning.

[1] Pp. 330–31 P. for this and what follows. Compare also pp. 823 and 761 P.

Clement starts from the current philosophical conception of God as the highest abstraction and simplicity, to be reached by removing not only body parts and passions, but all relations and qualities. He has no natural relation, for instance, to ourselves; and the proof of his goodness is that he loves us notwithstanding, for we have nothing to do with his essence or nature, but are simply creatures of his will.[1] Nor must we think with the Stoics—he might have added the Lord himself—that God's virtue is like ours. If he is good, he is not good by nature (for that would subject him to necessity), but because he wills to be good.[2] Clement is equally shocked by the Stoic doctrine of God's immanence "even in the basest matter," and by the Epicurean denial of any gods who care for the world at all. Nay rather, God is good, as Plato said, and not envious. If he permits evil, he is not therefore its author, as the Gnostics maintained he would be, for the fault of it is in ourselves. There is no predestination to good or evil, for the will is free both ways till it either reaches the highest state in perfect following of grace or sinks to the lowest in perfect slavery to sin. Perfect goodness or perfect badness is fixed habit, not freedom. Meanwhile our sin is wholly our own fault, of ignorance and fleshly weakness, and God is in no sense its author.

This is not very successful. Such a God ought to be utterly inscrutable, whereas there is neither sense nor meaning in the Gospel, except as an assurance that he is not inscrutable. It is the current conception of a purely transcendent God; and its inconsistency with

[1] P. 467 P. [2] Pp. 798, 855 P.

any historic incarnation was not fully seen till Arianism brought the question to an issue. Clement is also weak in referring God's goodness to will and not to nature; he has not overcome like Athanasius the dilemma that we must choose between caprice and fate. Yet again, he does not see that there is a problem behind God's permission of evil. He works out its results very well on the human side; but even his Platonic theory of punishment does not bring him to see that such punishment has a meaning on the divine side also. If the good God does not make me do the evil thing, at all events he makes it possible for me to do it: and surely this is not a fact we can take as a matter of course like Clement, as if there were no difficulty at all in it.

As we saw before, philosophy had come to a halt at the difficulty that a purely transcendent God requires a mediator, and does not admit of one. Now Clement combines the philosophical vagueness of Philo with the historical precision of St. John; but while Philo is chiefly thinking of cosmology and metaphysics, Clement follows St. John in looking on the Logos rather as the revealer of God and the teacher and trainer and saviour of men. Christ's manhood is a little hazy, but his premundane personality is clear, and his work is presented in the Greek way, as the gift of knowledge and immortality.

Clement was too much of a philosopher to dispute the Gnostic distinction between faith and knowledge; but he accepted it with an important reserve. The two were related as opinion to knowledge in Plato; that is, as appearance to reality. But whereas with the Gnostics the appearance had no true relation to the reality,

Clement held firmly to the historical facts of the revelation, and allowed no speculation to tamper with them. Faith, he says,[1] is the compendious knowledge of essentials, and knowledge is the strong and sure demonstration of what is received by faith. This nearly inverts their relation in St. Paul; but with Clement faith is more than St. Paul's knowledge, and knowledge is less than St. Paul's faith. Knowledge is with him a higher stage; for faith is a religion of hope and fear: it is knowledge, not faith, which works by love. Yet faith is necessary for all men, and sufficient for all men. He forgets that in that case there can be salvation without love; he is not deliberately maintaining it like the modern Church of Rome in its doctrine of Attrition. Indeed, he gives higher views of faith, as "a deliberate anticipation or assent of piety," or as "a power of God, being the force of truth."[2] These come nearer to St. Paul; but Clement wavers as usual.

He allows no such difference as the Gnostics made between "children and perfect." We are all children as being under the guidance of the Logos; yet all perfect, for we have all received the perfect gift. Everyone can "philosophize," whether man or woman, child or slave, Greek or barbarian, learned or simple. The youngest is not too young, and the oldest is not too old to learn. Virtue is the same for all, and every man of righteous purpose belongs to the Church.[3]

Knowledge, he maintains, must not only rest on faith,

[1] P. 665 P.
[2] Pp. 432, 434, 454 P. He uses Stoic words in all these passages.
[3] Pp. 590, 899 P.

but be worked out in life. It has to be won not by mystic trance, but by thoughtful toil, and perfected by patient and earnest practice. "He that will enter the shrine must be pure." Forgiveness is the light given in Baptism, by which we avoid sin; for it is no true repentance which needs often to repent for offending often. Though Clement seems nowhere formally to discuss forgiveness, he rightly sees that the thing needed is to root out sin, not simply to remit its punishment—which, indeed, he regards like Plato as purely remedial. And he rightly sees also that there is no need to appease an angry God: only to give men full assurance of his love, and strength to conquer sin. In this he gives the only reasonable cause for a revelation, and rises far above the satisfactions for sin devised by bad consciences, heathen or Christian.

Then Clement draws his picture of the true Gnostic or ideal Christian, much as the Stoics used to draw theirs of the wise man or ideal philosopher. The true Gnostic's life is all prayer, for all his works are prayers; all virtue, for his every act is a moral success.[1] Earthly passions and desires he has trained till he has ceased even to feel temptation. His aim is not moderation in them, but deliverance from them. At last nothing remains to disturb him but the bare needs of nature; and the perfect Gnostic, the Lord himself, was free from even these. He felt neither joy nor sorrow, and ate and drank only to prove that he was truly man—and to prove it in vain, so little does Clement really understand it. The Gnostic is passionless as a Stoic, loving as a Christian

[1] P. 796 P. *κατόρθωμα*—the Stoic word again.

saint. To the image of God in which we were created he adds the likeness of God which we have to win for ourselves—a moral likeness, not the intellectual likeness of Platonism. He cares only for necessaries, and not even for these as specially desirable, for knowledge is the one thing needful. He is patient, lives justly, rules his passions, "cuts away desire," speaks the truth unless a lie be needed in a medicinal way,[1] and is beneficent in word and deed to the utmost of his power. He then, says Clement, who has first moderated his passions and then trained himself to be passionless, and developed to the beneficence of Gnostic perfection, is equal to the angels here on earth.[2]

Upon the whole, Clement's teaching is like the Reformation in returning to St. Paul; but Clement is not narrowed and embittered as the Protestants were by their hard and demoralizing struggle with the bottomless treachery of the Catholic reaction. Thanks partly to the Roman peace, partly to the freedom of thought at Alexandria, partly to his own studious and uncontroversial temper, Clement was able to combine intensity of Christian purpose with a philosophical detachment hardly possible in modern Europe till the wars of religion began to abate. So his work is a many-sided effort by careful and scholarly study of Scripture and philosophy to bring all human learning into its proper connexion with the revelation through the Logos. The problem which the Gnostic attacked by speculation in the interest of cosmology, Clement essayed by philosophy in the interest of religion, and with better results. If he has

[1] P. 863 P. [2] Pp. 792, 866 P.

not solved it, he has left us guiding lines of the highest value. His mistakes are personal failures rather than faults of plan. He is neither reasoner enough, nor scholar enough, nor man of the world enough; and above all, he could not shake off the weaknesses of Greek philosophy. Though his Gnostic is a noble character, but for the hideous blot of the medicinal lie—itself a legacy of the philosophers—he is too intellectual, too detached from the relations of life, too much given to the Stoic *ἀπάθεια*. Surely he has not reckoned with the guile of sin who strives to overcome it by direct and solitary efforts rather than to crowd it out by faithful use of the training appointed him in common life. Clement reflects everywhere the weakness of his own time. The philosophical conception of God as purely transcendental struggles in him with the immanence implied by the Incarnation, the emptiness of abstract being with the goodness revealed in Christ, the aristocratic spirit of heathenism with the universalism of the Gospel, Platonic contempt of the body with its Christian consecration. If everything is in solution, everything is in the solution. Though Clement had a better view than later writers of the problem in its world-wide range, he was not the man to overcome its difficulties. No man ever followed more nobly after the true light whose ever-present coming into the world lighteth every man; but the experience of a ruder and darker age than Clement's was required to convince a new and growing world of nations of their need of a gospel of a Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Clement represents the school of Alexandria for our

purpose better than Origen, because he views the Gospel more as a new fact which philosophy has to reckon with, and less as the one fact which determines the meaning of all others. Clement is more Greek and philosopher, Origen more Egyptian and Christian. This does not mean that Clement was a whit less loyal to Christ—nothing can surpass the fervour of his splendid peroration *to the Greeks*, but that his Christianity holds a less commanding position in his mind. If it forms the most important part of his philosophy, it is not the supreme study to which all learning leads up. He studies it rather in its relations to philosophy than for itself like Origen, to bring the revelation into scientific form. It is just this wider though intellectually less definitely Christian outlook which makes him specially interesting in an age so like his own.

In one important point Clement has the advantage. There is no such Egyptian strain in him of fanaticism and ascetic excess as that which darkens Origen's early manhood. Whether from Greek moderation, or from philosophical detachment, or rather from a deeper feeling that common life is our appointed training, Clement is less ascetic, and so far more Christian, than almost any later writer. With all his faults, he comes nearer to a reasonable and Christian belief that pleasure is as much God's message as pain, and to be refused only on definite grounds of wrong or danger to ourselves or others. The asceticism which refuses it on general grounds belongs to the dualism which counts creation evil. It differs in principle from the Christian self-denial which denies only the flesh—by which St. Paul

means not the body, but the spirit of rebellion we make our second nature. Widespread as it has been in Christian churches, it flatly contradicts the thankfulness which sums up all Christian ethics, and has always been an incongruous and debasing element in Christian thought. If Clement is not free from it, he has less of it than almost anyone else before the Reformation.

This, however, is an exception. Generally speaking, and in the sense we have now in view, Origen's mind is more definitely Christian than Clement's. And this is natural. Christianity came into the world, not as an idea to be logically developed according to the needs of controversy, but as a fact of history which gathered round it more and more the thoughts of thinking men. At first it seemed a concrete fact among other facts, no doubt with consequences of its own, but not greatly disturbing the rest. Men needed time to find out that its relation to other facts must be organic, not mechanical, so that it would not leave unaltered any single conception which bears upon religion.

So it is not entirely an accident of personal character that the systematic work of Origen is in such contrast to the rambling discussions of Clement. His *de Principiis* is the first attempt at a system of Christian doctrine. He begins by setting forth the rule of faith—the facts essential to Christianity in the sense that a man who denies them is no more a Christian than a man who denies Mahomet's mission is a Muslim. These accepted, says he, all further questions are open; and these further questions he discusses with a freedom which scandalized

many in his own time, and the Church in general in more timid ages.

Though Origen was still entangled in the old difficulty of creation by a purely transcendent God, we see signs that the question was ripening to an answer. The form into which the Gospel threw it was that of maintaining at once the deity of Christ and the unity of God. There was no escape yet from the dilemma that if Christ is God there must be two Gods—which is flat paganism; and if he is not God, there is nothing but a piece of idol-worship to distinguish Christianity from simple Theism. Indeed, there could be no escape, so long as a doctrine of pure transcendence made unity inconsistent with distinctions inside the divine nature. The question was less urgent in the second century; but in the third the general return to monotheism, or at least to monism, was bringing it to a crisis. When a thinker like Origen is driven to such an unthinkable conception as that of a secondary God, some decisive change of outlook is not far off. Origen's chief advance is his theory of the eternal generation. If Christ was the Son of God in a peculiar sense, as all Christians were agreed, the relation could not be subject to time. Whatever the generation of the Son might mean, it was not an event in time which we might imagine dated, but a process which is eternal in the sense of belonging to a higher order than that of time. This cleared the way for Athanasius; but Origen never ventured on the decisive step of placing the Sonship inside the divine nature.

Origen also did important work in other directions. As a commentator he far excelled all before him. Not

that he was able to rise above the unsound allegorical methods of his time; on the contrary, he worked them out on a more extensive scale than ever. But his mind was so active that he could not help throwing out seeds of thought in all directions, like the famous passage which forms the motto of Butler's *Analogy*. This use of allegory may, indeed, have helped him to see through mistakes of literal interpretation which ensnared his successors. Thus he sees very clearly that the early narratives of Genesis must be symbolic, and that the Sermon on the Mount describes an ideal of temper to be aimed at, not a law to be literally obeyed in action. The blow on the *right* cheek is decisive for him, because it is just what hardly ever occurs.

LECTURE XVI.

THE NICENE AGE.

After Origen comes Athanasius, the one saint of Christendom before whom Gibbon himself bows down in loyal admiration. The difficulty which had baffled Philo and the Stoics, Tertullian and Origen alike, was brought to a crisis by the rise of Arianism. Now Arianism is one of the most modern of the old heresies, and strangely English in its impatient common sense. "There is Darwinism in this also," says a great man of science;[1] "the cold north, which has hardened our bodies and made us the envy of all nations, in iron energy and cool courage, has also chilled our imagination and stiffened our mental frame." So more than half the blunders we make about our Bible come from sheer want of imagination to understand the language of sunnier climates than our own. We read our chapter soberly, and turn metaphors into literal fact when we come to —say, the serpent in Eden, Jonah's fish, the real presence in the elements, the streets of gold, the lake of fire. This is Arius to the life. He is just like the English Deists and their successors, though he had no excuse of climate. He simply did not understand a metaphor.

[1] Kitchen Parker, *Mammalian Descent*, 211.

The point is that in using a metaphor we assert no likeness of things, or even of relations beyond those necessarily implied by the metaphor. Thus we have no right to speak of a heavenly Father unless we believe that the heavenly relation is like the earthly; but also we are not bound to carry over to it the incidentals of the earthly. In the one case the metaphor is misused; in the other it ceases to be a metaphor, because it passes into a likeness of things. Arius made both mistakes at once. Given that the New Testament writers speak of Christ as *the* Son of God, we may either accept the metaphor as substantially true, or we may reject it as misleading and illegitimate. Arius accepted it, but not as substantially true. He went astray after the incidentals of human sonship, limited the divine by these, and presently found himself compelled to deny the one belief which justifies the metaphor. If we use it at all, we must use it of an eternal relation which may be divine, not of accidents of time which can have no place in a divine nature. As Athanasius points out, the part of human sonship which we can carry over to a sonship which is divine and eternal is not succession in time, but likeness of kind. As the son of a man is by nature human, so the Son of God must be by nature divine; and if this is not what we mean, we have no business to use the metaphor at all. It becomes a mere misuse of language.

Arius is nothing if he is not logical; yet his system is as illogical as it can be. He begins with a God of mystery beyond the knowledge of the Son himself; yet argues everywhere as if divine relations were fully

measured by human. He begins by pressing the human incidentals of sonship, and soon finds that the divine is no real sonship at all. In his hands the Lord's divinity is no more than our own, and the eternity in God's counsel allowed him in the past does not raise him above the beasts. He begins by declaring that worship of a creature is idolatry; yet when he has made the Son of God a creature, he worships him notwithstanding. He begins with Christ's true manhood; but when he comes to the difficulty of two finite spirits united in one person, he is forced to get out of it by denying that Christ had anything human but the body. In the end he is neither truly God nor truly man, but a heathen demigod.

It was easy to shew that Arianism was utterly illogical, that it is opposed to Scripture, and that it neither was nor ever had been the official teaching of the Churches. So far the bishops were nearly unanimous. Nor can it be doubted that they were quite right in their interpretation of Scripture. As the canon stood then, and as it stands now, the New Testament plainly teaches that Jesus of Nazareth was in the highest sense a divine Person; and there was no dispute over the canon. The authority of the New Testament may, of course, be challenged; but this was not the line taken by the Arians. The line they did take, that a lower doctrine can be made good without altering the canon, seems nearly abandoned now. Recent Unitarians usually reject the Fourth Gospel,[1] and often other books too. The authority

[1] Principal Drummond is a great exception; but he stands almost alone.

of Scripture may be questioned, and the canon may be questioned; but granting both, as all parties did at Nicæa, there seems but one conclusion possible. The Council had some doubts whether Arianism went the full length of denying the doctrine, and serious doubts whether it was good policy to force on every bishop (the creed was meant only for bishops) a direct contradiction of Arianism. If they hesitated, it was not because anyone imagined the doctrine to be an open question for Christian men. On this they were absolutely agreed. Arius himself never meant to deny the deity of Christ; only, his idea of deity was Greek, not Christian. Theoretically, he agreed that what is creature cannot be God, and even made a point of it, but practically he saw no inconsistency in calling this creature God, and giving him worship, which no Christian man may give to any created being. As most of the Eastern bishops were still going more or less on Origen's lines, emphasizing the subordination of the Son to the Father, and trying to make him a secondary God, they were not easily satisfied that Arianism was something more than an extreme form of their own doctrine. It was no doubt wrong; but was not Athanasius forgetting something when he made the question vital? Was there no danger on the other side? If they kept too far from the ditch of Arianism, would they not fall into the quagmire of Sabellianism? If they refused the Arian distinction of the Son from the Father, how could they avoid the Sabellian confusion?

The danger was real, but it had to be faced. Now that the question was fairly before the Council, they

could not refuse to decide whether the doctrine was in their belief true or false. And if not false, it must be fundamental: Christ's deity cannot be a secondary question for Christian men. They must either confess it and guard it from evasions like Arianism, or else deny it outright. Half measures were worse than useless. Had they denied it entirely the churches might just possibly have settled down into something like Islam, though with Jesus for the Prophet instead of Mahomet. This, however, would have been a most unlikely issue, for the chief currents of thought ran another way. Such a result would have reversed not only the five hundred years' drift of Greek thought towards a mediator, but the fixed principle of Christian thought which even the Gnostics could not get rid of, that the meaning of Christ's Person is eternal as well as universal. At best, there would have been an end of Christianity. But anything in the nature of an Arian compromise would have sunk them even more quickly into paganism. Monotheism can hold its ground in Islam, because it has neither Greek nor Christian ways of thinking to contend with, so that Mahomet is no more than a prophet; but the distinctive doctrine of the Gospel—that Christ is himself the full and final revelation of the Father—so centres Christian thought upon him, that the unity of God could not long have survived the authorized worship of a being whom all his greatness does not raise above the level of a creature. The system might not have ceased to be a formal monotheism, but in practice it must have become thoroughly polytheistic.

The enforcement of a doctrine is at best an evil necessity; but in this case the necessity was plain, if they did not mean to give up all difference of principle between Christianity and heathenism. It was not enough to say that Christ is of God or like God, for so are we; and nothing was gained by saying that he is *more* like God than we are.[1] The purely transcendental conception of God could not be made consistent with the Incarnation which is the primary fact of the Gospel; so they were forced to reconsider it. For the last century serious persons had tended to believe in a dim far-off Supreme, essentially unknown and unrelated to us except through mediators, and the Christians had (rather uneasily) followed the stream. But now Arianism brought the Council face to face with the fact that the Incarnation implies the contrary of all this. If Christ is the full and final revelation of the Father, God is not unknown or unrelated to us, and the Son must have his origin in no creative will, but in the inmost nature of the Eternal.[2] This is the meaning of the Nicene decision, and this is all that Athanasius really cared for. He always laid the stress on From the essence of the

[1] F. M. Stawell, *Indep. Rev.* (1904), iv 232. "After Philo and Plato it was little use to say that Christ was merely like God, and the Spirit that came to us like both. Only the thorough-going assertion of unity could satisfy the longings and quiet the doubts that had been raised. Small wonder that the earliest Fathers of the Church were Greeks; for it was just this assertion that they had never dared to maintain outright, and yet which was needed to set their thought at harmony with itself."

[2] As John Caird argues, *Gifford Lectures*, i 70 *sq.*: the Trinity is not a real difficulty. Complexity increases upward. God cannot be without love; love implies a second, and the world is no second for God. That second must be eternal, that is within the divine *nature*.

Father—a clause we have dropped from the creed—not on Of one essence with the Father.[1]

The Christian doctrine of the Person of Christ can be stated simply enough—that he is as divine as the Father, and as human as ourselves. This is the sum total of Christian orthodoxy on the matter, and anyone who means this means all that Athanasius ever meant. The technicalities of the creeds add nothing to it, and were only meant (and needed) to prevent officials of the Church from saying it, like Arius and many of the moderns, in some evasive sense which entirely changes its meaning.

The Council of Nicæa saved not only Christianity, but the political freedom of a distant future. Had the decision gone the other way, the Church must either have sunk back into an effete paganism, or shaped itself on despotic ideals of the Muslim sort. It did fall back for ages into something like paganism, and shape itself largely on despotic ideals; and but for the Nicene decision the debasement must have been complete. Something better than Islam or paganism was working at the back of Christian consciousness for a thousand years and more before it came to the front again. If that old tale of love divine is true—if it was indeed the eternal Son of God who gave himself for men, the first thing clear is that his claim on our love and thankfulness is paramount, so that all other such claims will sink to nothing before it. The saints are men and not God,

[1] Athanasius, of course, valued the *ὁμοούσιον* as a needful safeguard ; but he very seldom uses it in his own statements. He commonly prefers *ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας γέννημα*.

and the paganism will vanish with the darkness. The second thing clear is that if God spared not his own Son but gave him up for us all, he will not deal with us as slaves like a despot in heaven. And if we are free before God, we ought to be free before men. It is the old Stoic paradox, that the wise man is always free; but now there is a reason given for it, and a vindication reaching back to the inmost nature of the divine. Whether the doctrine of Christ's full deity be true or false, this is what it means, and this is what it must for ever witness to all that can accept it.

We need not trace the complicated history of the Arian reaction. Suffice it that the Nicene decision was established for the Roman world by the Council of Constantinople in 381, and for the barbarians by the overthrow of the Gothic power in Italy and Gaul. Nor is there anything to dwell upon in the three hundred years of christological controversy which followed. The question, it is true, was no longer of Christ's relation to the Father, but of the connexion of divine and human in his Person; but the combatants are still the same. Those who doubted of his manhood now join it as closely as they can to his deity, that it may be swallowed up and lost in it: and those who doubted of his deity now separate his manhood from it as far as they are able, that the overpowering splendour may not utterly efface it. But the decisive blow had long been struck. The Nicene decision involved all that followed. When once it was agreed that Christ was in the fullest sense both God and man, all the compromises had to be swept away like Arianism. It is a long and weary history;

but the issue was the only one that logic would allow.

For the result then of the long controversy, the Christians hold that Jesus of Nazareth was not simply a man like other men, but a divine Person assuming human nature and limited by it in his action on earth, as we have seen he very well might be without losing anything of the character which alone is essentially divine. This was their conclusion from Scripture. They did not come to it by the usual methods of Natural Theology, and neither can we; but we note the fact, that they so believe. They hold further, that the divine Person who was made flesh in Jesus of Nazareth is the Word of God; and one of the things they mean by this is that he embodies the thought of God and speaks it forth into the world, so that every word of God to men—that is to say, every true thought of men—must rest on and express some aspect of the personal Word as its ever-present background. In a word, he is the Truth. Here again we are carried beyond the range of what is commonly understood by Natural Theology; but we note the fact, that such is their belief.

But now, is there not an element of truth in this way of thinking? Were it all true, it would certainly involve a good deal of what is commonly called miraculous; yet there is a side on which it would seem to be absolutely natural. This conception of the Person of Christ, howsoever it was reached, is a brilliant example of a law that seems to hold at every meeting-point of spirit and matter, of higher and lower personal character, of divine and human. They tell us that the divine in

him was real, though the human was as perfect as if it stood alone; that his acts cannot be divided between the two, as if he did this as God and that as man;[1] yet that the two did not unite in some third thing which is neither the one nor the other. Of course, this was never given as a full answer to the question; only as marking out certain lines within which the answer must lie. Yet, so far as it goes, this theory is in perfect accord with what we find elsewhere.

Take first the structure of man himself. We are not going beyond Natural Theology if we say that while he has a spark of the divine, he has also the animal nature as complete as the gorilla. But we cannot sharply divide his acts between the two. In one direction we all know that there is actually more of the animal in some of the higher manifestations of spirit than in many of the lower; in another, it is just the tragedy that the worst acts have an element of spirit perverted. It is no such contest as the ascetics imagine, of spirit as good against the body as bad, but the spirit is divided against itself. Now take the meeting of one imperfect person with another. So far as human influence is good, it works toward the same ideal. A wise parent or teacher scrupulously respects the child's or the pupil's personality, and desires rather to be a pervasive influence than to dictate particular acts, while the child or the pupil is not perfect till he does of himself the things a

[1] This is the rule. Hesitating explanations of difficulties like Mark xiii 32 are no more than inconsistencies, though even Athanasius and Anselm hesitated. Human and divine *in alternation* destroys the whole conception of the incarnation.

perfectly wise teacher or parent would wish him to do. Every divergence from this ideal means imperfection on one side or both.

Now take the meeting of divine and human. If man is the image of God, divine influence cannot be essentially different from human, though it must be perfectly all that the best human influence endeavours to be. Thus divine guidance also must scrupulously respect the personality of men, and work rather by shaping character than by issuing occasional commands. It will not appear any more than human guidance as one force acting among the rest. It will rather be a directive power which leaves the spiritual in man as free as that leaves the physical, so that we cannot divide his life between the two. Every act of it must be *both* divine and human, as the life of Jesus of Nazareth is said to have been. Even sin is a misuse of power that is divine. On the other hand, an evil influence is contrary to a man's true nature, and cannot be assimilated; and the more habitually he takes it for his guide, the more destructive it must be. We need no special or miraculous revelation to tell us that he cannot give himself up to evil beyond certain limits without becoming something like a demoniac. Evil is always an intruder and a tyrant, though an intruder we ourselves invite and a tyrant we ourselves enthrone. But there is no limit to a perfectly good influence but the man's willingness to receive it. Such an influence would be in perfect harmony with everything in him but sin, so that if sin were absent, as it is said to have been in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, it would leave his human nature

absolutely unconstrained. The two would be in constant free accord, for parallelism would naturally result from their true affinity and perfect likeness.

The Greeks were occupied near four hundred years by the questions raised at Nicæa and Chalcedon; for we may mark the end of the long development by the fall of the last monothelete emperor in 713. Then came a change. While they were working out the doctrine of Christ's Person to the last refinements of orthodox accuracy, they had fallen into gross idolatry and superstition. They might ignore the taunts of Muslims and Paulicians; but the Iconoclast controversy burst upon them when Leo the "Isaurian" raised the question in 727. Was it right to worship images,[1] or even to set them up in churches, if men could not have them there without worshipping them? The scandal is undeniable, for the learned defenders of images were almost as full of superstition as the vulgar. The Isaurians rank among the strongest of the emperors, and they were fully resolved to put an end to it; yet they failed, and perhaps it was as well that they failed. They were soldiers and leaned on the army, so that they worked in the main by military violence, almost as if image-worship were chiefly a breach of law. They did not see that it was only one symptom among others of a generally superstitious habit of mind which they shared themselves, so that they could not even attempt a radical cure.

More than this. There was a genuinely religious element in the superstition, and the Isaurians over-

[1] The distinction of προσκύνησις τιμητικὴ from λατρεία was not practical.

looked it to their own confusion. The Church had made of Christ a philosophical abstraction, and forgotten that he was a living man; and though the images did not stand for Christ's humanity,[1] they did stand for the more general truth, that men cannot do without something human to worship. The Iconoclasts had an excellent case, with common sense on their side, plain words of Scripture, and the authority of the early Church; but mere reasoning always gives way to a primary instinct of religion. So polytheistic thought gained another victory over a monotheism which left out the human element in that which it set forth for worship.

After Iconoclasm come only the quarrels with Rome and the higglings of Reunion. The Eastern Church has done good mission work since the ninth century; and if it has suffered more than the Latin from the oppres-

[1] This may be a tempting theory if we isolate the Iconoclast controversy; but the broader facts of history seem to point the other way. No fuller appreciation of Christ's true manhood followed either the beginnings of image-worship in the fourth and fifth centuries, or its decisive victory in the ninth. It was not seriously realized in the later Middle Ages when images abounded, or at the Renaissance when they were given artistic form; nor is it now in the modern Church of Rome. The mystics, as we shall see, are the sort of exception which proves the rule. Such interest as Latin thought has in Christ's humanity is chiefly concentrated on aspects of the Crucifixion which are not emphasized in the New Testament. Even Protestants have too much forgotten that (Hebr. xii 2) the cross is preached as shame, rather than a *quantum* of suffering. Again, "the return to Christ" in our own time is an essentially Protestant movement, and is nowhere more vigorous than in Scotland, where there are not many images to help it.

In fact, the tendency of images is to obscure Christ's true manhood, for they are mostly images of saints, so that the humanity they preach is not so much Christ's as that of saints. There is not much to choose between those who forget that he was man and those who worship men instead of him.

sions of Muslims and the worldly schemings of emperors, it has never set itself in such resolute antagonism to the advance of Christian thought. But it has contributed nothing to it. The mere existence of a great Church which is neither Catholic nor Protestant has had some influence on the West; but its particular doctrines have commanded small attention, and the real difference of East and West has been obscured by surface likenesses. The confusion of Greek and Latin in the English mind seems perennial. Yet (for instance) Transubstantiation in the East has little more than a name in common with the Tridentine doctrine, and the Eastern meaning of a coronation differs widely from the Western. But the prospect of new life in the Eastern Church must wait for the fall of the Sultan and the Tsar.

In striking contrast to the better mind of the Eastern Church stands the Muslim conception, such as it is, of the knowledge of God. The twofold reaction which Islam soon developed, against Greek superstition and against Greek philosophy, sums up at once its power and its weakness. In one we see the lofty doctrine of election by sovereign grace which has given it occasional years of brilliant victory; in the other the cast-iron literalism of traditional unreason which has condemned it to centuries of stagnation. On its positive side, however, Islam is most akin to Judaism, though it has a few advantages over Judaism. If it receives proselytes, and that to perfect spiritual equality, it does not barely receive them as Judaism did after the destruction of the Temple, but undertakes like Christianity a mission to all nations. Islam is still a

missionary faith, from the Senegal to China, and the Muslims of Liverpool have not been wanting in endeavours to convert the English from their Christian darkness. But in a general way Islam may be described as Judaism mixed up with a good many heathen superstitions, like those connected with the Bairam and the pilgrimage to Mecca, debased at every turn by the unreasoning legalism of Pharisaic scrupulosity, and carefully stereotyped for all time. The Mahdi is a faint image of the Messianic hope, and Islam holds forth no promise of a better law to be written in the hearts of men. The Koran is to be obeyed exactly as it stands till Israfil shall sound the blast of consternation for the day of doom.

More precisely, there is but one God, sovereign in his four great attributes of life, knowledge, power, and will.[1] He is alone to be adored—worship of Christ or saints is idolatry to be abhorred of true believers; he alone knows all things, can do all things, wills all things, including the unbelief of the unbeliever and the irreligion of the wicked. All that he wills comes to pass, and what he does not will does not come to pass. Besides this ultra-Calvinistic fatalism, we notice here that the four great attributes tell us nothing of the character behind them; and we shall see presently that the matter is not much helped by declarations that God is merciful and forgiving. So far as these four go, he might be an almighty Evil. Mahomet has gone a step beyond the Agnostics, from Force to Will; but he has not got much further. God's action is according to

[1] The other three (hearing, sight, speech) concern us less.

his own sovereign will, and man must on no account presume to see any reason in it. God is great; and there is no more to be said. Mahomet was not philosopher enough to see how completely this denial of the image of God in man cuts up religion by the roots.

If man has no likeness to God, the right inference is that he can have no knowledge of God at all; but Mahomet concluded that he can have only such knowledge as God has been pleased to give him directly; and this is practically summed up[1] in the Koran and the traditions. Now, the Koran cannot be worthy of God unless its inspiration is a mechanical communication of words and letters, and almost of pronunciation; for an inward illumination is a lower sort of message which might come to secondary prophets, or sometimes even to Mahomet himself, but is not in the fullest sense the authentic word of God. Such is the Koran. It is not the record of a revelation like the Bible: it is itself the revelation.

So far Islam will remind us of some familiar Calvinistic positions; and it is very Protestant also in its horror of images. But its real affinities are much more on the Catholic side. To begin with, there is the striking likeness of prayer in an unknown tongue, which Islam and Rome alone seem to have in common. But in this Islam goes further than Rome. To whatever countries the faith may find its way, the confession

[1] Nature is to Mahomet something of what it was to the Old Testament writers. Nor did he ever abrogate the Law, the Psalms, and the Gospel; only, the Koran practically supersedes them.

must be in Arabic, the public prayers must be in Arabic, and even the private prayer five times daily must be in Arabic. Again, the Koran is not the religion of Muslims in the same sense as the Bible was said to be the religion of Protestants. Not a single sect of Islam goes by the Koran alone. Sunnis and Shiahs have differing traditions, and the Wahhabis cut away a good deal of the accumulation; but they are all agreed that a genuine tradition of the Prophet's words or deeds is as binding as a word of the Koran itself. Some go further, but all go so far. This is not unlike the way the Christians make Jesus of Nazareth their example; but there is less in it of logical consistency, for Mahomet himself never pretended to be more than a man and a sinner. Perhaps it is as well for the Christians that they have no information corresponding to the mass of personal gossip about Mahomet which we owe to the research or the invention of his followers. However, no orthodox believer refuses or can refuse to accept the Koran and the traditions together, not simply as a complete and perfect law, but as a law for ever final on all questions of politics, morals, and religion. He is not even allowed to interpret it by reason and his own judgment. The judge must in all things go by the technical rules and the opinions of the four Imams of the eighth and ninth centuries, and the commentator may set down nothing but what others have said before him, unless he succeeds in finding a tradition they have overlooked. In a word, Islam allows no growth.

Yet this God of Mahomet, the one effective will in the

universe, is not without a good deal of human weakness. He can repent—at least he could in Mahomet's lifetime, and abrogate a perfect command by "one like it, or a better."[1] Again, we are told that he is merciful and forgiving; and this might have transformed the whole system if it had been otherwise put. Thrown down as it is like an oracle from heaven, having no foundation shewn in the divine character and seeking no response in human nature, it means only that God is a good-natured sultan who for unknown reasons will let off some favoured persons on easy terms; and these reasons cannot be reasons of justice, unless a positive merit is ascribed to orthodoxy. The true believer finds his way to Paradise on the merits of a decent life and certain ceremonies and good works; and even if his bad works outweigh the good, he will not come into the eternal fire prepared for misbelievers and hypocrites. If many Muslims take higher ground than this, it is not the Koran which lifts them to it. Mahomet has no doctrine of a God who is not a man that he should repent, nor a son of man that he should have respect of persons.

Given a rigid system of religion, only two methods

[1] This abrogation of one command by another, which is confessedly a change of mind on God's part, is very different from the alleged fulfilment of the Law by Christ. The Christian position is not that the Law was summarily changed for something better, but that the eternal part of it is precisely that which is not positive law, while the rest was given by Providence for a temporary purpose, and became meaningless when that purpose was fulfilled.

Islam everywhere refuses to recognize any difference between the eternal truth of a divine message and the form of time which it must wear. Thus the doctrine that the Koran is eternal and uncreated expresses even profounder truth than Islam has ever dared to see in it; but the neglect of this distinction makes it ridiculous.

of reform are possible. It may be relaxed by liberal thought, or it may be practically superseded by the inner light of mysticism. In Islam both plans have been tried. The liberal school of the Mutazilas came into power with the Khalif Al Mamun in the ninth century, and was overthrown in the next generation by the fanatical Mutawakkil, whose reign marks the rapid fall of the Khalifate. The court influences which favoured them were more Persian than Arab. The Mutazilas did not begin as revolutionists; only, if passages of the Koran are obscure, must not reason judge of them, instead of leaving them without a meaning? But this brought them to some startling conclusions. It was a new thing in Islam to maintain that the knowledge of God is as much within the province of reason as the knowledge of man; that man has perfect freedom, and can know good and evil of reason, and by reason only; that inspiration is illumination, not dictation; that revelation declares no rigid law, but is a growth shaped by the course of history. Had the Mutazilas been able to hold their ground, Islam would at any rate not be the unreasoning and unchanging thing it is.

But it was felt at once that these men were no true believers. They were going astray after Greek philosophy, and destroying all certainty in religion. Issue was joined on a question so simple that we may be sure it conceals a difficulty. Is the Koran eternal, or is it not? The Mutazilas threw down the challenge by Al Mamun's decision that it is not eternal. Like the denial of verbal inspiration in our own time, this was dangerous teaching without a more serious view than the Mutazilas put

forward of a guiding Providence, for Islam had confused the form of revelation with the substance till there was no escape from the conclusion that if both are not eternal, both must be purely human. All parties were agreed so far; and therefore a created Koran could not be more than a godless growth of a godless reason. The Mutazilas would have had a strong position if they had been Greek enough to see that reason is itself a spark of the divine in man; but they could not set aside the first principle of Islam, that there is nothing human in God, nothing divine in man. An eternal Koran is a scandal to religion, but a denial of the divine in reason overthrows religion entirely. The Mutazilas missed the one thing needful; the zealots maintained it, though at the cost of much unreason.

So Hanbal and the defenders of an eternal Koran really took the higher ground, as well as the more genuinely Muslim position. Their firm resistance foiled the persecutions of Mamun and Mutasim, and Wathik gave up the struggle. The Mutazilas fell, to rise no more. They had only shewn that liberal thought contradicts the fundamentals of Islam; and inside Islam it has never flourished since, except at Akbar's court. Philosophy struggled on for some time, but Avicenna and Averroes were hardly counted true Muslims at all. If Islam has had great reformers, like Saladin in one direction and the Wahhabis in another, the reforming cry has always been, Back to the Koran and the tradition. The recent revival of Mutazilism in India is due to Western influences; and here again the old dilemma will return. No man can be at once a

follower of reason and a good Muslim. Unreason is not simply the religion of the many or even the doctrine of the learned: it is the very foundation of the faith of Islam. We may come to something better when reason is allowed to judge; but it will not be Islam.

The mystic movement has been in some ways more successful than the liberal. It still continues, and in some forms is more than tolerated. The dervishes play a part in Islam resembling that of the monks in the Middle Ages. As the Turks are the Pharisees of Islam, so the Persians are its mystics, for Persia is of all Muslim countries the one Islam has least made its own. Sufiism is essentially a very ordinary mysticism of the baser sort, working by the lower methods of asceticism and ecstasy, and working towards a pantheistic absorption of the usual kind. So ordinary is it that we have to look twice before we can make sure that it is not Neoplatonic, or Indian, or Christian. Now Sufiism does get free from the rigid legalism of Islam, though it pays a price for its freedom. It rejects the guidance of reason as a good Muslim should; but instead of the Koran and the tradition, it follows chiefly the inner light, and with the usual results. The general effect is what we might have expected if mysticism had run riot in the mediæval monasteries. There would have been some lofty aspiration, and a few saintly characters; but the amount of hypocrisy, quackery, and downright immorality would have been appalling. So it is in Persia; and the best is further deeply tainted with "reserve" and esoteric unbelief. The Persians are

morally below the Turks; and from Persia the evil has spread through the length and breadth of Islam.

The Babis in Persia stand on a higher level, if there be living power in men who have endured persecution with heroic courage. Babiism has spread in spite of persecution, and may have a great future; but the system is such a confusion of Christianity, Sufiism, Islam, and other elements, that we can hardly guess what that future will be. Beha took something of the same position towards the Gospel as Mahomet did; but his claim to be Christ returned compelled him to come very much closer to its teaching than the Koran does. The future is yet to be seen: the one thing certain is that if Persia ever becomes Babi, it will *ipso facto* cease to be Muslim.[1]

[1] The poverty of characters in the *Arabian Nights* is in striking contrast to their richness of incident. About a dozen characters, all of the very simplest, make up the book. Even the sheikh Abu-r-Ruweysh is a good Muslim like the rest, though just a little more formidable. He shews few traces of his infernal pedigree.

Simply as a study of character, any one of the Gospels is incomparably richer than the whole of the *Arabian Nights*. But complexity of character is one of Christ's discoveries.

LECTURE XVII.

ROME PAGAN.

If it seem strange that we have been able to trace the development of Greek thought far into Christian times with so little mention of Rome, the reason is that the old Roman religion was a low sort of polytheism which contributed little or nothing directly to the growth of the idea of revelation. Like that of Greece, it was a part of the discipline of the State; but unlike that of Greece, it was hardly anything more. From first to last in heathen times it had no articles of belief: it was only "the ceremonies of the Roman people," as the Emperor Valerian described it. Even a *pontifex maximus* was not bound to believe in the existence of the gods; but no citizen was allowed to neglect the ceremonies or to worship gods not recognized by public authority. This was the law of the Twelve Tables, and this was the advice of Mæcenas which at any rate describes the policy of Augustus. That policy restored a decayed law, and was itself relaxed in course of time; but till Constantine's time Rome never sanctioned the worship of gods who were not on the official list.

What the religion gained in dignity it lost in power by this close alliance with so strong a State. Consuls

and senators might fill its priesthoods; but the consuls and senators were statesmen whose first care was rather for the State than for religion. The layman's influence was always supreme in heathen Rome. The senate decided questions of religion, not the priests; and if a man offended, his punishment came neither from outraged gods nor at the instance of the priest, but straight from the magistrate. No poetry worth mention gathered round the old religion, and only a scanty growth of legend relieves the monotony of its dreary round of ceremonies. The one bright part of it was the merriment of the rustic festivals. The Roman of the old republic gave his devotion wholly to the State.

Rome was not like Athens, a part of some larger Hellas, but claimed his whole duty, so that he worshipped the gods only as part of the discipline of the State. The civilization of Rome had created a Latin West, and her law had left its mark on the Hellenic East, long before her religion came into the main stream of human thought. Upon the whole, the first Latin name of universal significance for the history of religion is Cyprian; and from his time Latin ideas of the old sort develop almost as freely within the Church as they had developed in heathen times. Great as were the changes made in the religion of Rome, first by Greek influences, then by the Eastern worships, and afterward by Christianity, they are more concerned with particular opinions than with the general ideas which underlie systems of religion. Even the change from polytheism to Christianity made no break, for the Gospel was construed in terms of the old religion. We see important

changes in the appearance of a creed and the growth of a priestly order with exclusive rights, in the shifting of government from a lay to a clerical basis, in the transformation of the Church into a rival State, and in a secondary influence of monotheism and Christian ethics; but upon the whole the fundamental conception of religion as collective, legal, ceremonial, and exclusive is very much the same throughout the history of Rome, and has undergone no essential change from the times of Romulus and Numa to our own; and the changes we do find are not so much the work of Christianity as of the Eastern worships which went before it.

But what were these general ideas, these old principles of the Roman religion? The same that we find in most of the old polytheisms. They were formal religions, in the sense that their demands were much more ceremonial than moral; social religions, in the sense that the gods had much more to do with the State or the family than with the individual; limited religions, in the sense that they enjoined no duties of friendship, or even of justice, to outsiders. In a word, they were at all points the reverse of an ethical, personal, and universal religion. The type is widespread and archaic, and the old Romans give us a very good sample of it. The very first thing we notice is their scrupulous and timid care for ceremonial accuracy. The right god must be invoked by the right name, in the right form of words and with the right ceremonies. A wrong word or gesture or an unlucky omen will vitiate the whole. If all these characters are also found in Greece, they were much accentuated at Rome, partly by the greater strength of

the State, and partly by the more secular and prosaic temper of the Romans. The peculiarity of Rome is not their existence, hardly their strength, but their astonishing permanence. If they are not supreme in the Roman religion of to-day, they are at any rate some of the strongest forces working in it. The history of Roman jurisprudence is the evolution of general and moral principles from the narrow and unreasoned formalism of Quiritarian law; but religion underwent no similar development. Temples were built, gods adopted, new festivals devised; but the official religion was very little changed in character. The new elements that came in with Greek philosophy and Eastern worships remained separate, and chiefly served as outlets for tempers which the old religion discouraged as too inquisitive or too enthusiastic for Roman dignity and moderation. In its Christian form it has worked these elements along with some higher ones into a comprehensive scheme which enables it to provide within itself an outlet for the enthusiastic spirits which needs must go their own way. It has never succeeded so well with the inquisitive spirits, which needs must ask inconvenient questions about the seat of authority in religion.

The oldest religion of the Romans was very practical and unreflective, and generally more archaic than the oldest we can trace in Greece. They had not reached even the Polynesian consciousness that the world needs a story of some sort to account for its existence. Whence and Whither were not questions which troubled them, and the problem of evil faced them chiefly in the practical shape of public enemies. Images and temples

they had none at first: only symbols of divinity. There were the gods, but nobody cared to ask how they came there. They had nothing human about them. They never came down to earth or conversed with men like the gods of Homer. They did not even form a divine society, for every god stood isolated from the rest, unrelated even to his duplicate of the feminine gender. They were not so much as personal beings: they were abstractions, formless powers—*numina*—which stood in defined relations to men, and had no other significance. Their very names in most cases denoted nothing but these relations; and even the individual names did not stand for individual character. Given the name of the god who presides over the sowing or the harrowing, and given also the right formula of prayer to him, the Roman never troubled himself to know anything more about him.

As the affairs of men filled the life of gods, so the affairs of gods filled the life of men. There were the rites of worship; but nobody cared to ask why these rites availed more than others. Such was the custom, such the discipline of the State; and that was enough. In short, they had no philosophy. All that they wanted was to consult the gods on every undertaking, and to make sure that their favour was not forfeited by any offence or neglect. It was the authority to report or interpret evil omens which gave the three great colleges of religion[1] a voice in State affairs; but though they sometimes used it factiously enough, they never attempted to form anything like a church party.

[1] The *pontifices*, augurs, and *duo-decem-quindecim-viri sacris faciundis* (in charge of the Sibylline books).

Religion was a strict bargain. It was piety to give the gods their due, holiness to know the ritual.[1] On one side, the gods could not be expected to do their part of the contract unless they got their *sacra* performed without omission or mistake. But if men did their part accurately, the gods became their debtors, and were bound to give such piety a practical reward, like gain in private life or victory in war. If they failed in this, there was clearly something wrong, but the Roman was more inclined to think he had forgotten something than to murmur at the action of the gods.

It was just the lowness of the religion which enabled it to pervade life in the way it did. The higher the conception of the divine, the harder it is to make men live constantly in its presence as the old Romans did. At every step of life he referred him to the gods by sacrifice, libation, or other observance, and at every undertaking inquired of them by omens or augury. Holy days were frequent, but holy rites never ceased. In some ways the old Roman is the very best of the ancient heathens. The Greek of the Periclean age might rival him in sense of duty to the State, but not in dignity and purity of private life; and even the Pharisee had no more vivid feeling that every act of life concerns the divine, and involves the risk of offences which must be scrupulously atoned for by sacrifices and lustrations. The high moral tone of Roman life was a marvel to Greeks in the time of Polybius; and they were not mistaken in tracing it to religion, though it

[1] Cicero, *de nat. deor.* 1. 11, *est enim pietas justitia adversus deos . . . sanctitas autem scientia colendorum sacrorum.*

was no direct result of religion. There was nothing moral in the religion itself beyond the fact that it was a religion of some sort. The gods were no givers of spiritual things, and the Roman's prayer was always for material benefits like health, good crops, or victory in war. Even the upright dealing which so struck Polybius was no direct issue of religion. Again, the gods were not supposed to declare their will on any general or moral principles, but simply to state what it was in each successive case; and men on their side had scarcely any idea of what we call sin. The offence to the gods was purely ceremonial—some flaw in the ritual—so that the only way of getting at a conception of sin was by resolving it into disobedience; and this is a feature of Roman religion from first to last. Few peoples ever had more religion, few civilized peoples a lower religion. The service of the State was made a school of virtue by the Roman's sense of duty and habits of obedience, and private life was kept pure by his genuine respect for the Roman matron. He never took the Greek plan of giving culture to the harlots, and leaving ignorance for honest women. But his religion taught no virtue: it was nothing more than a round of observances for which no reason was given or even asked.

The foundations of the religion of Rome ascribed to Numa were too firmly laid to be obliterated by the adoption of new polytheistic worships, or even of Christianity. No great change was made for a long time by the Greek influence which came in with the Tarquins, under whom Rome was a great power in central Italy — witness the great temple of Jupiter

Capitolinus, and the treaty with Carthage. Though that power fell with them, Greek influence did not cease to come in directly from Cumæ and the rest of the colonies, and indirectly from other Italian cities, for Rome was always more or less of a commercial centre. But after all, it came to nothing more than a few new gods worshipped with Greek rites outside the *pomoerium*, sundry new temples, and some new festivals. Meanwhile the native elements of the religion were not choked, but shewed every sign of vigorous growth. New gods were invented of the native type, the formulæ of worship steadily grew in length and complexity; settling families like the Claudii brought their gods with them, and those adopted from conquered cities, like Juno Regina from Veii, were Italian in character, not Greek.

The two great landmarks of the history of Italy are the Hannibalic and the Gothic wars. Outside them lies division: between them seven hundred years of unity and empire. The republic had subdued the Samnite and the Gaul, and borne with unshaken courage the tremendous vicissitudes of the First Punic War; but even Roman fortitude was strained to the breaking point by the sixteen years of deadly struggle against the genius of Hannibal. For heroic tenacity there is nothing like it but the rise of the Dutch republic. The religion of Rome was as deeply marked by it as her constitutional or economic history. The wild agony of religious terror which found omens in everything might pass away with the danger, but the Roman character never quite recovered its balance. Indeed, the Roman people was no

longer the same. The yeomen of Rome had left their bones on Hannibal's battlefields and on more distant scenes of war; and their place was ill supplied by gangs of slaves and scattered herdmen on the desolated soil of Italy. Even worse were the Lazzaroni of the city, with its mixed multitude of foreigners and slaves and freedmen.

The conquest of the world not only opened to Rome the worships of the world, but brought them bodily to Rome. Greek worships came in apace, and Roman deities were worshipped in the Greek way. What was more, they were identified wholesale with Greek gods, and invested with their characters. The old state ceremonies were scarcely changed; but round them accumulated a luxuriant growth of foreign worships. These were mostly Greek; but the coming of the *Magna Mater* from Pessinus in 205 foreshadowed the great invasion of Eastern worships under the Empire. Towards the end of the republic, religion was in as great confusion as the government. The office of *Flamen Dialis* was left vacant for years, and that of *Pontifex Maximus* was given to mere politicians like Cæsar and Lepidus.

But Greece had something to give that was better than superstition and jugglery in general. Philosophy had seen its best days a hundred years and more before the legions came in with Flamininus; but Greece had not yet lost her glamour for the nations. She had Stoics, Epicureans, and sceptical Academics, and Rome could shew followers of all three. But while the Sceptics were few, and Lucretius stands almost alone for the Epicureans, many Roman literary men were more or

less of Stoics. They did but follow the example of the Greeks themselves if they set aside the old physical speculations of the school, and limited themselves to its ethical teaching, which enabled them to bring ethical principles into their own jurisprudence. The conception of equity as a higher law to which positive law should be made to conform was reached by the identification of the Roman *jus gentium* with the Stoic law of nature. From first to last, the Romans very seldom cared for any side of philosophy but the ethical.

But if educated Romans were often Stoics, few of them were thorough-going Stoics before the last days of the republic. Practical men, as most of them were, may admire philosophy in general; but they usually make practical reserves in carrying out philosophical theory. So Roman good sense usually toned down the austerity of Stoicism with milder teachings, often of Platonic origin. The example was set by Panætius, the philosophical chief of the literary circle which gathered round the younger Scipio; and it was followed by Cicero, the man who did more than anyone to make philosophy popular in Rome. The younger Cato represents neither the time before him nor his own time; he is rather a forerunner of the unbending and unpractical virtue which defied the Empire in men like Pætus Thrasea and Helvidius Priscus. But upon the whole the more moderate school was the stronger, even in imperial times. The Emperor Marcus kept his philosophy apart from politics, Epictetus kept to moral teaching, and Seneca discredited the wise man's lofty character by the part he played as Nero's guardian and minister.

Neither the philosophers nor their followers had any active quarrel with the religion of the State. If they complied with the ceremonies, they were not required to believe the legends. They were free to rationalize the gods in Euhemeristic fashion as deified men, to allegorize them as powers of nature, to take them for secondary powers more human than the one Substance, or to move them out of the way like the Epicureans as too blessed to care for the affairs of men. But they seldom openly denied their existence, and still more seldom directly attacked religion in the modern style. Lucretius is the exception (even among the Epicureans) which proves the rule, for his violence only shews the strength of its hold, even in his time, not only on the common people and the literary dabblers, but on the philosophers themselves. Men who built their ethics on the general opinion of men could not afford to despise so general a belief as that of the existence of gods. Moreover, there were weighty reasons of policy for scrupulously conforming to "the ceremonies of the Roman people." Ancient customs deserved respect, and the observances of religion were by no means to be neglected, even if their only use was to put some check on the disorders of the silly multitude. There was no question of truth, as the Christians fancied later, for truth belonged to philosophy, and had nothing to do with religion. So freethinkers like Lælius or Mucius Scævola were rightly counted pillars of religion, and even the sceptic pontiff Cotta refuses to deny the gods—in public. The philosophers could shew martyrs for duty, but none for religion.

If philosophy was profoundly religious in the Roman sense, it seems at first sight profoundly irreligious in our sense. Even moderate men like Panætius or Posidonius denied the immortality of the soul, rejected the idea of providence, and admitted no particular or special revelation. Even the God of whom they spoke so much was nothing more than Fate or Necessity. The simile of human life was the dog tied behind the carriage. Nevertheless, they were deeply religious even in our sense, if there is any religion in a very lofty sense of duty. Few men have striven with more impressive courage to work out St. Paul's ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶ νόμος than the stern despairing moralists of Roman Stoicism. They fought a losing battle, and they knew it. This world was against them, and they drew no strength from another like the Christians. The idea of God grew clearer in course of time, and the rigid sense of duty was softened with human kindliness in the age of Epictetus and the Emperor Marcus. But the Stoics were never such a power in the world as the Christians. Their faith they proved abundantly; but they had neither hope to offer nor charity to preach, and least of all a story of a living Saviour to draw upon for living power. It was not given to them to cure the ancient sickness inbred in the State; but with all their failures they remain on record as the men whose courage never bent before the storms in which the ancient world of nations passed away.

Meanwhile the chaos of the late republic was settling down into the order of the Empire. Whatever Julius may have intended, Augustus came forward as a Saviour

of Society, and was therefore pledged to a conservative policy in Church and State. This placed the Empire in a false position from the first. Its ideal policy would have been to organize the world on the lines of an empire, with one ruler, one law, one system of administration, one religion; and this was more or less aimed at by such emperors as were statesmen. But meanwhile Augustus —no doubt for good reasons—had committed them to a general respect for the old ideas of the republic, the old claims of Society, and the old variety of religions. So they were never able to work out the ideal. If they evolved a monarchy with a court and civil service; and extended Roman law with the Roman franchise to the world, they could not overcome the particularism of local feeling, of class feeling, and of religious feeling. The great cleft of East and West was never bridged over, and had to be recognized at last by a division of the Empire; and the difference of Syrians and Egyptians, Gauls and Spaniards, Greeks and Phrygians, was not abolished when they all called themselves Romans. Class feeling also was too strong for the emperors. Society resented their choice of officials from the lower ranks, and there was a standing feud till the reforms of the fourth century practically reserved high civil office for men of high birth, while the emperors were left free to choose their generals as they pleased. Indeed, the class feeling outlived the Empire, and only disappeared with the old society itself, in the anarchy of the seventh century. Even Gregory of Tours is always anxious to tell us how well born the saints were. Least of all could the emperors establish unity in religion. The miscel-

laneous worships of the world might form a conglomerate; but there was no true unity in heathenism, and Jews and Christians were always nonconformists. All that could be done was to add the worship of the emperor himself. This was true catholic worship, for "all the world wondered after the beast," and it made a more or less genuine religion of its kind. But there was always a touch of untruth in it. The emperor was never a very satisfactory god; and though his divinity survived the shock of transfer to Flavians and Antonines, there was not much left of it after the military confusion of the third century. Diocletian confessed its failure by turning it into an etiquette of the palace, and the last apotheosis was that of Jovian.[1]

Returning, however, to Augustus, he unquestionably effected a great revival of the old religion. Temples were repaired, priesthoods filled up, the old rituals carefully provided for. There are no more intermissions now. The ceremonies go on regularly for many generations, like the services of a cathedral. The Arval Brethren sing their immemorial chant in Gordian's time, and the knights of Rome ride year by year to Vesta's door in that of Constantine. Gods might be forgotten like the *dea dia* of the Arval Brethren, but the ritual as a whole seems to have gone on without a break till the reign of Gratian, and parts of it still longer. The *Lupercalia* were not abolished before the time of Theodoric.

If Augustus was able to fix the old ceremonies for three hundred years and more, he could not create

[1] That of Theodosius would seem to be no more than Claudian's poetry.

much genuine belief in the gods. No doubt the scepticism belonged more especially to the age of change marked by the civil wars, so that much of it passed away when the Empire settled down. Even in the upper classes it was not universal;[1] and in all ranks of life devout believers were never wanting. Perhaps things lay very much the same way as in our own age of change, where unsettlement and indifference and sceptical talk are much more common than clear and reasoned unbelief. In fact, religion did not lose everything that was lost to the gods of the State. There may have been much trifling and silliness and running after novelties, but it was not commonly in any spirit of irreligion that men turned away from the dreary formalism of Rome to the warmer worships of the East. Bucolic gods were out of place in a great city. There were many who looked to Isis and Mithras for something more reasonable than the *mumpsimus* of the State religion, more definite than scepticism, more kindly than the cold comfort of philosophy. They wanted present help in this life, and assurance for another; and when they found that nothing was gained by gathering ideas of Greek polytheism round the shadowy names of the old Italian gods they turned to the mysterious wisdom of the august and ancient East.

Thus the movement was not the pure folly and perversity it is often taken for. Like saint-worship a

[1] For instance, we cannot certainly infer Cæsar's personal disbelief in immortality from his speech on the Catilinarian conspirators, where he may be acting more or less as an advocate. This hint I owe to Dr. Shuckburgh.

few centuries later, it was the reaction of human nature against a system which made the divine unreal. With all their quackeries, these Eastern worships answered the craving for a higher life and for communion with unseen powers in a way the old unspiritual religion of the State could not. So they crept upward in society from the slaves, the traders, the soldiers, and the women till the strongest of the emperors became their votaries, and the proudest of the senators recorded on their tombs the strange baptisms of the blood of bulls and goats by which they had been born again to life eternal. The Great Mother was brought from Phrygia near the end of the Hannibalic War, the savage Bellona of Commagene came with Sulla from the East, and Isis was in fashion before the end of the republic, though she was repeatedly expelled, and only secured her final recognition after the death of Tiberius. The sun-god Mithras, from the farther East, became known to the Romans in the course of the Pirates' War; and though they took a couple of centuries to get over their disgust of so uncouth and barbarous a deity, they ended by putting him at the head of the great confusion of gods which marks the last stage of paganism. In Serapis—Baal—Mithras—Helios—Jupiter, standing for Egypt, Syria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, the whole world seemed at last united in the worship of the Unconquered Sun as the worthiest symbol of a distant and dimly known Supreme. The final battle in the age of Constantine was round the cross; but was it to be the cross of Christ or the Sun-god's cross of light?

In the second century after Christ the Eastern

worships must be set down as a third form of return to religion alongside of the Stoic philosophy and the devout endeavours of men like Plutarch to cleanse the old polytheism. In the third century Neoplatonism alone confronted them, and in the fourth the two were brought into more or less close alliance by the theurgists, so that a fairly united paganism faced the Christians in Julian's time. So far as regards the methods of revelation, the Eastern worships were not unlike the Greek and Roman. They dealt in a very similar way with dreams and oracles, omens and incantations, bringing back many obsolete and some revolting practices to vigorous life, and adding rituals and observances of their own. In general they were much of a family, though the worship of Mithras would seem to have been the most developed of them. But whatever were their individual differences, some general features mark them out, not altogether as higher than the worship of the old gods, but certainly as representing a later stage in the history of religion. In some of these they seem to take a step towards Christianity, and in some a very considerable step towards the Catholic forms of Christianity which prevailed after the fourth century.

In the first place, they were universal religions, not only in the sense of receiving all comers and taking their priests from all nations, but because the local stamp they bore was not essential. Once fairly spread through the Empire, the worships of Isis and Mithras remained Egyptian and Persian only in the same sense as Christianity remains Judæan. Again, they were in the main personal religions. The priest had a good

deal to say, but in general the worshipper came near as an individual in a personal relation to the god, not simply as a member of the State or the family. In these two points they resembled philosophy: in others they differed.

For one thing, they were clerical religions. They had sacrificing priests, not priests of the old Roman sort, whose more special function was rather to dictate the proper forms of prayer to the person sacrificing. In old times men approached the gods only as members of a society; but they approached them directly. This was now reversed. They approached the gods as individuals; but they had to approach them through a priest. These priests then formed a regular clergy for the performance, not only of occasional sacrifices, but of regular divine services, in the Mithraic worship three times daily, returning in an annual round of festivals. It was also their office to be spiritual advisers of their followers—a function the philosophers had undertaken, but which had never been connected with priests of the older sort. This was a great advance. Even the Jewish priest had no sort of pastoral care. The qualifications for his office were purely physical, its duties ceremonial. Preaching and ghostly counsel were not his work, but cutting up beasts and answering legal questions. But these Eastern priests form a clear transition to the lower forms of the Christian ministry. Without ceasing to offer sacrifices, they stood out as mediators between the gods and men, preaching and offering spiritual help for the guidance of life. This was more specially done by the priests of Isis and Mithras, for other worships were less developed, and those of the Great Mother

in particular being recognized by the State, and therefore appointed or confirmed by the *quindecimviri*, were by that fact more allied to the State worships.

In all directions religion was taking over again the work philosophy had made shift to do in the transition period. First, the old unethical religion had filled life with ceremonies, then philosophy had sought to pervade it with ethical principles, and now the Eastern worships were relating principles as well as ceremonies to the gods, and so pervading life with religion. It was not a high religion, but religion it was. The devout women who worshipped Isis were very like the devout women of Roman Catholic countries. Their sense of religion might be quickened by fashion, but in the main it was genuine and zealous, though the religion itself was largely formal, ascetic, and irrational. So also real moral needs were satisfied by the worship of Mithras, the Sun-god, the author and preserver of life, the giver of immortality to such as cleansed their lips from sin, and washed their hands from evil. It was not for nothing that a great catholic church of Mithras overspread, like the Christians, every land from Persia to Britain. But while the Christians were strongest in the commercial cities of the East and in Africa, the Mithraists flourished at Rome and in the frontier provinces where the legions lay, so that they suffered more in the confusions of the third century. However, they had regular and irregular clergy, ascetics, mendicant friars, and divers orders of faithful men. They had a church year culminating on the birthday of Mithras (December 25), with processions of noisy devotees, and mysteries performed by vested

priests with all the pomp of blazing lights and stately rituals. There was a catechumenate also of fasting and preparation, followed by a "sacrament" of baptism, with the mystic seal of Mithras marked on the candidate's brow, in token of his promise to be a faithful "soldier" of Mithras to his life's end, and under his banner to fight against the lusts of the flesh and the wiles of the demons. And this again was followed by a common meal of bread and water (afterwards it would seem of wine), in memory of the last meal of Mithras here on earth before the Sun's bright chariot carried him away to heaven. There was confession too, with penances and absolutions, for Mithras also received sinners. The ascended god was his people's ever-present help, their redeemer and their "crown"; and he shall be their judge hereafter in the day when the wicked are turned into hell with Ahriman and his angels. And when the time is come for the soul that has conquered in the trial of life to take its journey hence, it shall leave behind one by one the last encumbrances of earthly sense and passion, as it shoots upward through the successive spheres of heaven, till far above

> The clime congealed by Saturn's chilly tread,[1]

it attains the empyrean dwelling-place of Mithras and the gods, and takes its place with them in everlasting light and blessedness.[2]

[1] Algenti qua zona riget Saturnia tractu Claudian *de* III *consulata Honorii Aug.* 168. His apotheosis of Theodosius is on the lines of the Mithraic ascent of the soul.

[2] Fuller English accounts of Isis and Mithras in Bigg, *The Church's Task under the Empire*, published since the above was written.

I have drawn my picture of Mithraism at its best, and nearly in the language of its own adherents—rather as it might have been with ideal priests and people than as it actually was. For our purpose it is more important to point out its ideals than to count up the scandals. But scandals there were in plenty. In fact, there was too much asceticism, too much trust in outward forms, too much quackery and disorder connected with Mithraism for it to be other than largely immoral in practice. Its likeness to Christianity is too great to be accidental, but the balance of borrowing is not easy to determine. On some points, like the change from water to wine, the Mithraists may have taken a hint from the Christians, for Justin mentions water only, whereas with the Christians the wine was original. On the other hand, Christianity is the younger system, and the points of Catholic practice which agree with Mithraism are often third and fourth-century developments, and in some cases contrast very sharply with the New Testament, and with what we know of the sub-apostolic age. Yet coincidences do not of necessity imply borrowings; and the appearance of some of them among the Gnostics would tend to shew that many of them had a common origin in the popular religious ideas of the time. Thus the conception of priesthood common to Julian and Gregory of Nazianzus would seem to be a case of parallel development due to general causes, though in this instance we know that there was a good deal of minor borrowing on the heathen side.

Mithraism, then, was in many ways a transition from the old polytheisms to a higher conception of revelation.

Like Christianity, it was a catholic church with a clergy and a regular system of divine service. Like Christianity, it spoke much of sin and of purification from sin, and prescribed a more or less ethical rule of holiness. Like Christianity, it spoke of a divine mediator, and promised help to do right from an ascended Lord, and held out the hope of everlasting life to all believers. Yet on most of these points its advance on the old polytheism is less marked than its inferiority to Christianity. It had a weaker church system, for it laid no claim to a historic revelation delivered to its keeping. Its idea of sin was shallow; and therefore its purifications were perfunctory, and its rule of holiness was much less ethical than the Christian. If it spoke of a divine mediator ascended up on high, and culminated in its promise of his present help from heaven; on the other hand, it was not even a clear monotheism, but made much confusion by allowing any amount of worship to be given to strange gods. Hence even its promise of another life was not enough to make it the strong ethical force in this life which Christianity was. Above all, between Christ and Mithras is the gulf of death. The cross was wanting in Mithraism; and it is historically evident that the chief moral power of the Gospel lies precisely in the story of the cross of Christ. It is plain matter of history that whatever else the Gospel may contain, this old tale of love divine is what has reached the hearts of men, and called out strength and truth and purity of character far more abundantly than any philosophical teaching. It has been a mightier appeal than any doctrine of a future life. And just this is

wanting in Mithraism. Can we wonder that the Unconquered Sun went down before the Galilean?

Mithraism, with philosophy brought into alliance with it by Jamblichus and the theurgists, is from our point of view the highest point reached by heathenism in ancient times, for it aggregated together and brought into one vast system all the older ideas of revelation, though it completely failed to make the system coherent, or to prevent the lower conceptions from debasing the higher. But with all its likeness to the lower forms of Christianity, it belonged to the old order of the world, and was wrecked on the old difficulties. There was the theoretical difficulty of clearing up the personal distinctness of the supreme, as well from the world as from the crowd of lesser gods which made true transcendence and true immanence alike impossible; and there was the practical difficulty of finding a motive general enough and strong enough to reach Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise, and to give them in a deeper than the Mithraic sense a new birth to life eternal. The ancient world had sought in vain: would Christianity be more successful?

LECTURE XVIII.

ROME CHRISTIAN—EARLY.

I.

THE Book of Acts is rightly closed with St. Paul's arrival at Rome. An insight a statesman might have envied led him step by step from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Corinth, from Corinth to Rome. The battle for the world's faith could be finally decided nowhere but in the world's capital. Rome proved a stubborn pagan. The immortal gods had given her the empire of the world: who was this upstart Galilean who presumed to challenge them? She replied at once with the fires in Nero's gardens, and remained the centre of persecution as long as persecution was possible. Heathenism was still dominant at Rome when it had been almost suppressed in the East; and the last strong circle of heathen senators was only broken up on Alaric's capture of the city. In Theodoric's time, when the temples had been shut up for the best part of a century, the Lupercalia still found defenders among the populace, and heathen practices did not cease to be used avowedly as heathen practices before the ruin of the city by the Gothic War. In Christian forms or as mere superstition,

they never did cease; but we may take the consecration of Agrippa's Pantheon to the Virgin and all the martyrs by Boniface IV (apparently 610) as marking the extinction of the old heathenism at Rome, and indeed in the West generally; for though there was plenty of heathen superstition in later times, it was not practised with any purpose of returning to the old heathenism. Such heathenism as was avowed seems to have been Celtic or Teutonic. Upon the whole, the Latin world stood out longer than the Greek, held with more tenacity to heathen ideas and practices, carried over more of them into the Church, and shaped its Christianity more on heathen models.

Rome was never much given to unpractical thinking. She borrowed her philosophy in one age from the Greeks, in another from Teutonic schoolmen; and even her ecclesiastical system was made in Africa, though her own imperial instinct was needed to complete it. In her long line of popes we see great statesmen, lawyers, and administrators in abundance, but no such thinkers as Anselm or Bradwardine. The great creative thoughts are not of Roman birth: even the Holy Roman Empire was heralded by Tatian's barbarian trumpet. She hardly aspired to discover new truth concerning the knowledge of God, though she did splendid service in preserving some of the old. She intrenched herself behind some of the simplest doctrines of the Gospel, and surrounded them with rampart after rampart of church traditions and observances. Perhaps she was right. She fell on evil days, when it seemed as much as she could do to save some relics of civilization and religion

from the world-wide overthrow in which the everlasting Empire perished. Once for all, let us give her full admiring homage for the noble work she did in the dark time when tempest after tempest of barbarian invasion came up like a flood of mighty waters overflowing. For centuries she stood between the living and the dead, Christ's faithful witness and evangelist: and this was her authority and power to rule the world she was rescuing—authority forfeited only by ages of misrule, power not yet lost by centuries of ever-deepening falsehood.

Her relation to Greece is not unlike that of Ezra to the prophets. She stands on a lower plane of thought and morals, yet this was at first as much her misfortune as her fault. Perhaps she did the right thing for the earlier Middle Ages. The northern nations were stiff-necked like Israel till the anarchy of feudalism forced them to call the Church to aid, and really needed the restraint of a rigid law, while the weakness of the worn-out South equally needed its support. The rigid law was the necessary training for something better; and so far for some ages Rome did well.

But she never overcame the old false dualism of God and man, in which divine and human stand apart, or are connected only by some definite divine action which we may make believe is just or merciful, but which we cannot certainly know to be more than inscrutable caprice, till we come to see that the divine is of a higher order than the infinite of superhuman power and unbending law. So Latin thought always tended to regard God's action as abrupt and definite, and his

revelation as a series of miraculous interventions breaking through the order of a sinful and transitory world. They stand out like points of brilliant light; but the rest is utter darkness, for there is no diffused light in the Latin sky. God acts every now and then with a high hand and outstretched arm; but the rest of the world's history goes its way almost as if there were no God. The authorities of the Church were constituted once for all, the faith was delivered to them once for all, and day by day confirmed by miracles. What more could be wanted? No salvation but by grace; and grace was the gift of an absent King to the one visible Church, a remedy externally applied to individuals through the sacraments the Church dispensed on such terms as it thought fit.

This false dualism of God and man carried with it a false dualism of sacred and profane in public and private life. The Church was not only separated from the State, but in course of time sharply opposed to it as to something essentially profane. Then it must not be subject to the State, it cannot form a friendly alliance, it cannot even let the State go its own wicked way. Of course, the Church must obey the powers that be; but only till it is able to enforce its rights. The ideal of Gregory VII was to abolish the State entirely; but when Victor III and Urban II found this impossible, the next best thing was to control the State and make it the tool of the Church; and this has been the aim of the Roman Curia for the last eight hundred years. This aim compelled the Church to become a rival polity, working presumably for spiritual ends, but working chiefly by

carnal means. It is this conception of holiness which has entangled the Latin Church so much more than any other in the affairs of this world, and made her policy a perpetual scandal of worldly cunning and profane ambition. She has never been content to leave political intrigue alone, even in Romanist countries. The Roman Curia is essentially a political body, and shews in all its methods about the same regard for justice and religion as the Russian Foreign Office. I am not alluding here to the persecution of heretics, though that has never been repented of, and is expressly defended in the *Syllabus*; but to its treatment of the best members of its own Church. For instance, there is hardly a more detestable page of callous cruelty in history than that which records the way in which the Curia since 1571 has sacrificed the interests of English Roman Catholics and deliberately drawn persecution on them, not for any needs of religion, but simply to satisfy the political and financial greed of a gang of Italian schemers and their English parasites.

There is the same divorce of sacred and profane in private life, the same refusal to recognize a revelation in the common experience and intercourse of mankind. Certain persons, places, times, and things are supposed to be sacred in themselves, or rather made so by the Church, while others are essentially common. Thus in the case of persons, there is the contrast of priest and layman; of places, that of chancel and nave; of times, that of the saint's day and the common day. All these, and still more conspicuously the Latin doctrine of the Lord's Supper, are samples of "the unbelief which

ascribed a life-giving power to visible things, because it assumed the heaven and the earth to be divided by an impassable chasm."[1] It is a system of scepticism from top to bottom. So, too, the contrast of the "religious" life with the secular. Marriage is called a sacrament, and indeed was very rightly taken in hand by the Church in the times of confusion; but practically it is treated as a lower condition of life, a more or less discreditable concession to the weakness of the flesh, and at the least a great obstruction to any serious pursuit of holiness. And with marriage go the various natural relations which follow from it. The ideal of saintliness is not to make holy such merely secular things as these, but to renounce them one and all along with the works of the devil.

Now let us glance back on the regions where men have looked for knowledge of God. Nature is confessedly imperfect, and the Latins distrusted both nature and life as largely subject to the Evil One, and therefore in the main misleading. They were also too practical to look for God by means of some special sense or intuition. The mystics of the Middle Ages were chiefly Teutons, while what the Ultramontanes call mysticism in our time is a particularly gross and childish sort of theurgy. It is "naked fetishism."[2] However, if nature, life, and intuition are set aside, only two channels are left for revelation. It may be given through history, or it may take a special form;

[1] Hort, *Hulsean Lectures*, III.

[2] Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 262 n., of one of their books. His strong words are measured, and no way too severe.

and in one or both of these Western Christendom (Teutonic as well as Latin) placed the seat of authority in religion. The Church of Rome, however, limited the history through which revelation comes to the history of the Church, and the revelation which is specially given to Scripture and tradition; and so far the Reformers in the main followed her example. The advance was enormous when they denied the exclusive claims of the Roman Church, subjected all Church tradition to the authority of the original records, and once more recognized a revelation through life in the crucial case of the marriage of the clergy. But Protestantism has always been hampered with Latin survivals. Its unamiable features, like its witch-finding, its Calvinism, its pictures of hell, and its hard and fast conception of authority in general, are usually due to ways of thinking carried over from the Middle Ages, and more in harmony with the Latin spirit than with its own. So we are only now coming frankly to accept the revelation through nature, to look for the revelation through history in the world as well as in the Church, and to revive the old Eastern belief that the special revelation confessed by Christians is Christ himself, not simply the record of his words.

As the Greek Church gathered all its doctrine round the Person of Christ, so the Latin gathered all round the authority of the Church. Rome is not ignorant that some fundamentals must be proved by reason before the question of the Church can be reached. Even the Vatican Council expressly declared (against Agnostic thought) that God may be known by his

works.[1] But supposing reason allowed to "prove" the Church, she does not thereby escape collision with reason, for she thereupon requires us to obey her commands without regard to reason. But reason can prove nothing contrary to reason, and only reason can prove that a thing is not contrary to reason, so that commands which reason is not allowed to test cannot be cleared from the charge of being contrary to reason.

Formally, indeed, she only co-ordinates her own tradition with scripture as an equal source of knowledge for things divine; but she has long ago superseded scripture by claiming to be the sole judge of its meaning, and of late she has superseded tradition also by teaching for necessary doctrine opinions on which tradition is confessedly divided. But in forbidding the individual to judge, she requires him to accept without reserve as right or true whatever she may herself set forth as right or true. Reason and conscience are not to be pleaded against her; so that all questions of right or truth become questions of Church discipline only. The Church claims complete control of belief and action. Her decisions are the final test of truth, her commands the final rule of duty. All goodness is resolved into obedience, all wickedness summed up in disobedience.

It would be injustice to pretend that this has always been a true picture of the Church of Rome as a whole, or that all its members are fairly represented by it

[1] *Conc. Vat. Sess. III de revelatione Can.* 2. Si quis dixerit, Deum unum et verum, creatorem et dominum nostrum, per ea quæ facta sunt, naturali rationis humanæ lumine certo cognosci non posse; anathema sit.

even in our own time. It would ill become one who has been a colleague of Lord Acton to throw random scorn on the Romish layman. There is a great difference between the early Roman Church and the mediæval, the mediæval and the modern, between the recent orders and the Benedictines of St. Maur, the priest and the layman, the born Romanist and the apostate Protestant who has to shew himself zealous. But the tendency has always been more and more in this direction; and if something very like this is not the deliberate aim of the dominant Ultramontane party, they have much belied themselves.

Rome well deserved her ancient primacy. For wise counsel and Christian dignity that rarely failed, no Church could in the long run surpass "the Church of God which sojourneth in Rome." Stephen did her little credit; yet he was right where Cyprian was wrong; and great popes like Leo and Gregory tower far above their Eastern rivals. Only professed students now remember Anatolius and John the Faster, Timothy the Weasel[1] and John Talaja. And if she won supremacy in later times, she won it by a moral superiority that was real, in spite of the False Decretals and the *πορνοκρατία*. She guided the chief missionary work of the Karling age, and the Hildebrandine Reformation with all its faults was an ideal of right to the best men of its time. The *corruptio optimi* was a work of ages. In England we can measure its course by comparing the zeal of "Gregory our Father" with the rapacity of Innocent IV, or the

[1] ὁ Αἴλουρος: in Theophanes it is ὁ Ἕρουλος.

appointment of Theodore with that of Reynolds; and even Pandulf's mission is much better than the continual assassination plots in Elizabeth's time. So too it is a long step downward from the lofty earnestness of Gregory VII to the gasconades and meddling of Boniface VIII, and down again from these to the polished profanity of the Renaissance and the cruel treachery of the catholic reaction. Yet the complete subjection of learning was gradual. The schoolmen were allowed to mask some very uncatholic opinions with general professions of obedience, and on the eve of the Reformation Erasmus and Cajetan could freely discuss questions like the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or the canonicity of 2 Peter. Rome was not yet very jealous of opinions which neither challenged her authority nor endangered her revenues. Pomponazzi needed but a little irony to make him safe in denying the immortality of the soul; but Luther's attack on the Indulgences brought down on him the full weight of her anathema. Henceforth she was more suspicious, and went to work more systematically. The fetters of thought were not riveted till the Council of Trent; but the rivets have been steadily tightened since 1545, and all freedom in Church and State has had to be won against her strongest opposition. She began her career with Clement's noble plea for harmony and order in "the Church of God which sojourneth at Corinth," and long bore faithful witness of right and law before the barbarian and feudal anarchy of Western Europe; but for the last six hundred years or so the testimony of history

is clear against her as the chief promoter of rancour and divisions among Christian churches, of wars and bloodshed among Christian peoples. And I for one believe that the verdict of history is the voice of heaven.

After this first glance round, we may look a little more closely at some of the chief epochs of Latin Christianity. If we pass over others that may seem to be of equal or even greater importance, we pass them over partly that we may bring our work within reasonable compass, but more especially because the development we have to trace is not that of the Church or of doctrine generally, but that of the conception of the knowledge of God; and its course may be better shewn by an examination of certain periods than by any attempt to form a connected narrative.

But first let us look back again for a moment. There are two broad conceptions and no more of the knowledge of truth. In one of these reason judges; in the other it is subject to authority. On one theory the revelation is perceived, verified, and worked out by reason—the joint energy of feeling, thought, and will—from the sum of the data that may be found in nature, history, and life—including in history the special revelation, if such be admitted. On the other theory it is given by some authority whose decisions reason is not allowed to question. The authority may be some special feeling, some purely intellectual system, some scheme of practical needs, commonly working or embodied in some institution or some book supposed to be infallible. But in any case reason, in the sense we have given the word, is not

allowed to question the decisions of the authority. It becomes at best an *ancilla fidei*, whose highest function is to find reasonings for a foregone conclusion. All doubt is heresy and rebellion.

Broadly speaking, the Easterns took the first view, though with a good deal of leaning to mere intellectualism, the Teutons have been divided, and the Latins have taken the second view. The main current of Western[1] thought has always been strongly practical; but mere feeling often comes out in mystics and revivalists, and mere intellectualism is represented among the schoolmen, and by much critical and scientific thought in our own time. The Positivist and the Traditionalist are agreed that reason is no more than reasoning, though their reasonings bring them to different conclusions. The better view was in the background of Western thought all through the Middle Ages, and occasionally comes to the front, as where no less a person than the arch-reformer Gregory VII reminds us that Christ called himself truth, not custom.[2] But this was only wavering: Rome suppressed it at the Reformation, when the northern churches took an upward road.

The first Christian expressions of Latin thought are singularly noble. They begin with the centurion's fine and soldierly conception of Christ as a Cæsar commanding the host of heaven. This led straight to the illuminating thought of the *militia dei vivi*, that the

[1] Western is opposed to Eastern, so that it includes Latins and Teutons.

[2] Ep. 50, *Wimundo Aversano* (from Tertullian, *Virg. vel.* 1). Wimund himself was a man who had refused the spoil of England, and rebuked the Conqueror to his face.

service of Christ is every way like the service of Cæsar, yet every way a still nobler one. As an account of Christian life on its sterner side, this Latin thought is unsurpassed; yet it is only partial, and will no more suffice than other partial accounts. Magnificently as it illustrates the military virtues of obedience and discipline, courage and endurance, it makes no call for a reasonable service, and has no need for a loving service. These things only come in by the way, if they come in at all: nothing is really needed but obedience to the word of command. We can already see where to look for the weak side of Latin Christianity.

Even as the first Latin speaker is a centurion, so the first great Latin writer is the son of a centurion, and a lawyer. To Tertullian the revelation through the Christ is no more than a law. It is no doubt a better law than the Mosaic; but as a law he always construes it, regardless of St. Paul's warning that even a divine law cannot control the thoughts and intents of the heart. So his writings are not only full of the maxims and technical terms of Roman law, and of allusions to its procedure: they present every doctrine from a legal standpoint. As a sample, we may take his theory of tradition set forth in his "most plausible and most mischievous book"[1] *de Præscriptionibus*. We shall find it useful to compare him here with Irenæus.

They are both arguing against the Gnostic position, that whereas the Lord taught his disciples one of their systems—we will say Valentinianism—the churches had since replaced it with common Christianity. They both

[1] Hort.

use many pertinent arguments, as that the Lord's disciples must have known his doctrine and cannot have taught something else, and that the books which vouch for common Christianity can be traced back to apostolic age or authorship; but we find a characteristic difference when they come to the argument from tradition. Irenæus puts it thus. It matters little what church we take for our sample; but the church of Rome is fairly representative, because it is a great and leading church, kept well in touch with other churches by the constant influx of strangers. Here, then, is the series of its bishops from the time of the apostles to our own. Now, if the apostles taught Valentinianism, one of these bishops must have made a change, for the present bishop Eleutherus teaches common Christianity; and the Gnostics will have to shew who it was. The argument is perfectly sound. Pius X might fairly challenge us to point out when or between what limits of time his peculiar dogmas were adopted; and we should have a poor case if we could not answer him. This, however, is a matter of labour and learning, and Tertullian wanted to confound the heretics by a simple argument. He therefore fell back on the legal conception of *præscriptio*. If A's title to an estate was disputed, he might enter a demurrer that (whatever plaintiff's case might be) as a matter of fact he had held the land for so many years. If that were proved, judgment would have to be given for the defendant. The revelation is an estate consisting of writings, promises, etc. given by Christ to the Church; and the Church was in possession before the heretics arose. They are therefore summarily barred out; and

if they attempt to reason on Scripture, they must be told that Scripture is the property of the Church, so that they cannot be allowed to meddle with it. The case is now clear, so that we may set aside over-curious questions, which in fact lead to nothing but heresies and futile debates.

It must be allowed that this is not Tertullian's usual argument. Elsewhere he meets the heretics fairly on the ground of Scripture, and when he became a Montanist he had to defend avowed novelties against tradition. But the argument of the *de Præscriptionibus* was the mainstay of the Latin Church till quite lately. Plausible as it is, the unsoundness is evident. It takes for granted the disputed fact, that the Church of the time teaches exactly what the apostles originally delivered as the revelation of Christ. This is a question of history, so that when the advocates of tradition found that history is against them, as they notably did at the Reformation, they were obliged to bar the appeal to history by making further assumptions. Accordingly, Tertullian's argument has often been enforced by infallibilistic theories, as that the Church is the supreme interpreter of history, or that it possesses a certainty superior to history, so that "history must give place to dogma." Of late, however, the Church of Rome seems inclined to use the theory of infallibility not to confirm tradition but to supersede it by "development," which to the Ultramontane means that the Church has authority to álter its teaching from time as time as it thinks fit, and that of such fitness it is itself the sole judge.

Latin Christianity enters on a new stage in the middle of the third century, when for the first time the two great sees of Rome and Carthage were held by men who moved in the highest circles of heathen society. The age of "not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble"[1] was quite outgrown; and even a Christian Cæsar was not now impossible. But if the Church was getting a hold on the world, the world was also getting a hold on the Church. Cornelius of Rome will not detain us; but for good and for evil, Cyprian was the first prince of the Church. His nearest likeness is in some of our great English churchmen. They are born rulers—men of intense activity, yet of grave and winning gentleness, men of princely dignity and perfect self-command, as quick as any lawyer to judge of men, and as skilful organizers as any merchant prince. Such was Cyprian. Yet somehow we hardly get at the real man. He moves in matters of administration, and takes no leisure to face the deeper questions. It is not merely that he does not like to study principles: he will not meet them when they stare him in the face. He takes his church system for granted, and allows himself to be absorbed in it and overwhelmed by it; and the system is not quite Christ's. *Pro ecclesia Dei* is more in his mind than ἐν Χριστῷ. With all his winning qualities, we see less than we could wish the noblest fire of all, which shines so gloriously in many lesser men. Cyprian had no such commanding gifts of intellect as Athanasius to throw his piety into the background of our view of him; yet we do not so

[1] 1 Cor. i 26.

often feel in reading him that he is saint as well as ruler.

Saint he is, and martyr; and the Christian Church is justly proud of him; yet his general conception of religion is much more heathen than Christian. There is no sign that he ever troubled himself to think out the ideas on which it depends.[1] Like a practical man, he takes them from the air about him, assumes them to be not only true but self-evident, and concerns himself only with their practical application. As the heathen god's favour is strictly limited to his own people, so God's grace is strictly limited to the visible Church. "He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother. If he could escape who was outside the ark, so he will escape who is abroad and outside the Church. The Lord warns us, saying, He that is not with me is against me,"[2]—for Cyprian has no scruples in transferring the Lord's *personal* claim to the Church. As for the "aliens,"[3] neither innocence nor virtue nor even death for Christ can save them from the damnation of hell fire for ever. As the idol's favour is dispensed by his priests, so God's grace is dispensed by his priests the bishops,—for Cyprian is careful to count the bishops only[4] as priests, and to

[1] How little Cyprian can be regarded as a serious thinker may be seen from *Quod Idola* 5. Regna autem non merito accidunt, sed *sorte* variantur. It does not occur to him that this implies an utter denial of providence.

[2] Cyprian, *de Unitate* 6, quoting Mt. xii 30. The right quotation would have been Mk. ix 40: He that is not against *us* is for us; but I do not find that he ever uses it.

[3] *ad Demetr.* 22, quoting Mal. iv 1 (with *alienigenæ*: vulg. *superbi*).

[4] A reviewer says, "this is not certain"; but I have seen no serious reply to Benson (*Cyprian*, 33 n).

remind[1] the presbyters that they are only the Levites who minister at the altar. As a Roman magistrate held a defined authority—a "province"—in regular succession to its last holder, so must it be, and so, forsooth, it always must have been, in the Christian ministry. Thus sound doctrine ceases to approve the ministration, and the outward succession guarantees the soundness of the doctrine, so that the legal questions of a valid succession become vital.

Cyprian starts from the unity of the Church; and this he conceives not as a spiritual unity of faith and hope, but as the visible unity of a visible society. The Church is one, and the episcopate is one and undivided; for each part of it is held by each bishop for the whole. God's grace is given through the bishops and to the Church alone; therefore God's ordinance is an aristocracy of coequal bishops, each of them within the limits of faith and unity independent in his own city. Cyprian refused to constrain those bishops who disagreed with him even on a question he thought so important as the rebaptism of heretics. The bishop must also be sovereign in his own city. He is the priest, and resistance to him is the sin of Korah. He judges in Christ's place,[2] and whoso is an alien from the bishop is also an alien from Christ.[3] If a wise bishop does

[1] *Ep.* 1.

[2] *Vice sacra*, as was said of the emperor's deputy. He is copying the State as usual.

[3] I have not noticed that Cyprian discusses the possibility of an unjust exclusion; but everything indicates that he would scarcely have admitted it even to himself. The rebel he would certainly have condemned at once, and in any case; and if the suppliant could not persuade a Catholic bishop to readmit him, Cyprian would most likely have answered that such failure finally proved the justice of the exclusion.

nothing without the counsel of his presbyters and deacons, and the consent of the people, this is grace, not right. He listens as a Tudor king listens to his Council; but the decision in his own.

These, however, are surface matters. Forms of government in Church and State and belief or disbelief in their divine obligation are the outcome of deeper and more general conceptions of the knowledge of God. Cyprian shews us the Latin churchman's heart in his letter to Demetrianus. He tells us that the world is waxing old, and no longer brings forth its abundance. Pestilence and famine are warnings of wrath to come, and wars and rumours of wars declare the nearness of the day of doom. The Church stands open like the ark, for it is the only refuge. But it will not stand open much longer. Those within are safe; but when once the trumpet sounds, all that are found outside shall be cast into the fire of hell for ever.

Here is a religion of fear for you. Eminent Christians have believed something of the sort, from John Bunyan downward; but it is not Christianity. We are told that Christ came, not to save us from hell, but that we might have life, and have it in abundance; not to bind the chains of darkness on us, but that he might deliver all those who through fear of death were subject all their life to bondage. Revelation is represented as having to do first with this life, giving it new intensity and vividness and dignity by manifesting the infinite and eternal significance of that divine kinship without which all our thought is futile. But Cyprian's flock thought meanly of this life. How could they do other-

wise? The life of the city had lost its inspiration, the life of the individual was unsatisfying, and the Empire of Decius and Valerian was visibly sinking into some abyss of anarchy. But if this world was given over to the powers of evil, all serious effort must be turned away from it to make good our footing in another.

This view of life was no peculiarity of the Christians. Plotinus has the "other-worldly" outlook as clear as any monk of the Middle Ages; and, in fact, we find it almost everywhere from the decline of Greece till the Renaissance, except that the New Testament speaks of life eternal as something present here and now, not simply as a thing to be expected in the future. The difference is that, as the Christians were on the average more in earnest than their neighbours, the Tartarus they read into the New Testament was more real and therefore more terrible than the Tartarus of the poets or the hell of the Mithraists.

So it was easy to forget the positive claim of Christianity to set our life on earth in its right relation to God and man, and receive it simply as the one escape from hell. We are told that Christ said, He that believeth on me hath life eternal, not shall have it some day in another world. He is already passed from death into life. But the clear promise for the life that now is was turned into a glimpse of some future life seen dimly through the driving clouds of doubt and carnal fear. The man in the street wanted a certainty that he would not go to hell; and if he got that, he cared very little about anything else. Heaven was mighty fine, and the cross made a pretty story; but the

one practical thing was to be quite sure of not getting into hell.

Now we can understand the conception of revelation which is characteristic of the Latin West, though it has also prevailed with modifications in the orthodox East and the protestant North. It was not formed by any craft of priests, but by the steady pressure of the laity—monks and others. If the natural man wants a guarantee in black and white that he will not get into hell, no authority on earth but the Church can be supposed to give it. He therefore presses the Church to come forward and say, Believe the things I tell you, and do the things I command you, and I will guarantee you: and the Church cannot say that to much purpose without at least practically assuming to be infallible. Revelation therefore becomes a deposit of such and such dogmas to be believed, and such and such good works to be done, as the Church may think fit. Good works, be it noted, for the natural man will have nothing to do with that change of character which Jesus of Nazareth is said to have required. He will pay a high price for deliverance from hell, but he must pay it in his own current coin of works and observances. Only, the Church must be infallible, for otherwise there is no certainty in its guarantee.

Now, how do these ideas bear on the Bible? The Bible, then, is a collection of sixty-six books of sundry sorts, spread over at least nine hundred years, but forming a coherent whole when viewed as the record of a certain historical development. A very unequal history certainly, devoting whole chapters to a single day, and passing over a generation in a verse; but

history they are, or at any rate profess to be. Now, on the Latin theory of revelation, this is just what cannot be admitted, unless it be *pro forma*. If the purpose of revelation is to teach dogmas, and that not to common men but to the Church, then dogmas are the things to look for, and the church will have to look for them, or rather to authenticate those found. Thus the Bible reduces to a collection of texts in proof, or rather in illustration, of such authenticated dogmas. But we shall have to pick our pearls from the dunghill, for our first irreverent impulse is to say that the Bible is full of historical rubbish. Then comes the Church with her magic wand of allegorical interpretation. She smites; and from the flinty rock of history the living waters flow. The driest genealogies become full of spiritual instruction, and the smallest details—the scarlet thread, the two swords, the hundred and fifty-three fishes—contain mysteries that shall confound unborn generations of infidels. It becomes an enchanted ground where pious fancy can wander at its pleasure. It is a book of holy riddles, and only the profane will take it for a history of living men with passions like our own.

Now, it can hardly be denied that the fear of hell was the common motive of common men. Some, perhaps many, rose above it, and I quite believe that in the darkest ages there were none without a glimpse of something better. It was a Latin and a Jesuit, but a missionary, who wrote the original of:

> My God, I love thee—not because
> I hope for heaven thereby,
> Nor because they who love thee not
> Are lost eternally.

But it seems evident that the oppressive and demoralizing penitential system would not have been endured if the fear of hell had not been the common motive of common men in common times; and, in fact, we always find the system weaker in times when that fear is weaker. And the fear of hell demands an infallible Church, an oracular Bible, a law of good works, a system of penance for sins, and a definite conveyance of forgiveness to specified individuals.[1] These are the working parts of the Latin Church system.

Cyprian fairly won his own victory by noble qualities of practical charity and complete sincerity; but his system made way chiefly because he expressed the common man's ideas of religion so much more clearly than he could do it himself, and all the more clearly for having no higher principles of his own to confuse them. It was good enough and not too good for the average Christian, who strove to walk by sight and not by faith, and wanted above all things a definite guarantee that he would not get into hell. Cyprian represents as much of Christianity as the half-heathen faithful of his time could bring themselves to receive; and as the trend of thought in the next ages remained in the same direction, his influence became permanent. If it was partly reversed, it was more than half confirmed by Augustine's higher and more distinctly Christian thought; and if it was greatly shaken by the Reformation, it is by no means entirely destroyed even in the North.

[1] From this point of view the Absolutions of the English Church are worthless. That in the Morning Service is conditional, and not individual; that in the Visitation of the sick is individual, but neither compulsory nor unconditional, and that in the Communion is obviously a prayer, not a declaration.

True, the Cyprianic theory has not come down the ages without great changes. No Church but Rome now teaches that there is no salvation outside itself; and even Rome has now got some semi-official *démentis* for Protestant consumption. No Church now declares all baptism but its own invalid. No Church now counts the presbyter a Levite, for even Rome degrades Christ's minister no further than to make him a sacrificing priest. No Church now makes all bishops equal, for even the orthodox East is mostly organized in national patriarchates. Least of all does any Church now require its bishops to be elected by the other bishops of the civil province. Little as Cyprian might have liked these things, they were only the changes made in his theory by the logic of circumstances. The extension of the priesthood to the presbyters was a necessity when the bishop ceased to be the chief pastor of a manageable congregation in a city, and became the spiritual ruler of a vast establishment. The inequality of bishops did but recognize the fact that Rome was greater than Velitræ, Cæsarea than Sasima. Even the nomination of bishops by pope or king was the natural result of conflicts that were sure to arise between a catholic church and local governments. Subject then to necessary changes and natural developments, the Cyprianic theory as modified by Augustine and completed by Roman bishops has shaped the history of the Western Church for centuries, and deeply influenced both the orthodox East which never accepted it, and the Protestant North which rejected it. Some of its most rigid conceptions of the revelation are as clear in Calvinism as in the Church of Rome.

LECTURE XIX.

ROME CHRISTIAN.

II.

THE century and a half which followed Cyprian was a time of rapid change in Church and State. When we look again in 408, Christianity is supreme, but the Empire in the West is trembling to its fall. Alaric stands before the gates of Rome. The evils which destroyed the Empire were largely those which threaten modern Europe. We see the same unsettlement of religion, the same vague and lenient moralism and humanity, the same increasing contrast of rich and poor, the same growing burden of taxation and militarism, the same tendency to stereotype the methods of education in a barren routine, the same impotence of governments to cure the mischiefs caused by superficial morality and selfish greed in all classes. There are differences enough: modern society is not perishing. But if we let these things get beyond control, it is plain that neither science nor culture nor socialism nor nominal religion will save civilization from another catastrophe.

The state of society in the last century of the Western Empire is more safely judged of by incidental

allusions like those of Symmachus and Macrobius than from the furious tirades of such ascetics as Jerome and Salvian; and it does not seem to have been outrageously corrupt. With all its faults, it is improved since classical times. The dinner parties, for example, are much more decent. Slaveholders are not likely to be models of virtue; but the great landowners were mostly refined and cultured gentlemen, fond of their country life, and even fonder of their literary elegances. If the policy of the government shut them out from the army, they were not necessarily imbeciles or cowards,—witness the defence of Auvergne by Ecdicius, or the splendid services of Tonantius Ferreolus in Attila's invasion. Nor was the legislation of the Empire wanting in earnest humanity of purpose. The emperors were absolute and commonly well-disposed and able men. Honorius is the exception. They had good advisers too, and quite recognized the evils which oppressed the State. Law after law strikes at them straight and hard, sometimes even delivering gross offenders to "the avenging flames." But the emperor had lost control of the machine. The middle classes had been crushed by taxation, the smaller landowners had been squeezed out by the stress of the times, and the passive resistance of officials and great landowners defeated every attempt at reform. The officials ran riot in peculation, and the great landowners either corrupted them or simply ignored inconvenient laws. Even in the great crisis of the invasion of Radagaisus, when the very slaves were called to arms for the first time since Cannæ, the great landowners defrauded the

Empire of recruits, and sheltered deserters wholesale.

Culture and religion (apart from Christianity) were in the same hopeless condition. The old pagan literary education was still dominant, and law was studied to good purpose even in the West, but literature was fast decaying. What might have been made a solid foundation of grammar, history, antiquities, and criticism was turned into a perfunctory preparation for the serious work of the rhetorician; and that serious work was utter trifling. Form was everything, substance nothing. Literature was full of servility, mutual admiration, strange affectations of language, aud fantastic mythology. Just as "faith in Rome killed faith in mankind,"[1] so trust in words killed truth of thought. The remains of the classic past were no more than disjointed fragments of half-forgotten learning. If Homer and Virgil were still studied, no inspiration was drawn from them: they chiefly ministered to the erudition of a literary clique. Religion was in much the same state. The old polytheism was become a plaything of antiquarian learning and fanciful conceits, and was already sinking into a *paganismus* of rustic ignorance and superstition. Philosophy was nearly extinct; even in the East its champions were mostly theurgists and commentators. The Eastern worships had marked a real advance a couple of hundred years before; but now Mithras was as dead as Pan himself. The weakness of Christianity was stronger than the strongest of them. The cycle was complete. The ancient order of the world was dead.

[1] Professor Dill's phrase.

Si fractus illabatur orbis. In the midst of the universal wreck of Western civilization the Christian Church alone stood erect, and ready to face the darkening future of the world. Some prophetic instinct—or shall we call it Providence?—had long been gathering into the Church the various powers needed for the thousand years of conflict which no man had foreseen. If Commodianus had apocalyptic visions of the wrath of God poured out on Rome by angry Goths, they passed away with the horrors of the Decian persecution. The Christians were as firm believers in the Empire as any pagans. Prudentius tells us how the Scipios worked for Christ, and the conversion of the Empire was the fitting completion of Rome's majestic history. Till Alaric stood before Aurelian's walls, no man deemed that Rome would ever bow for need to the barbarians. Indeed, few quite believed it for at least another century. The world was tossing restlessly, for the passing of the everlasting Empire was like an evil dream. True, the "Gothic peace" of Euric in Gaul may have been as good as the *pax Romana* of Honorius; and certainly the Italian who had seen the last imperial hero in Majorian might well have preferred the wise rule of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. But the main current ran swiftly downward, and in the sixth century the change became visible almost suddenly all over the West. The Rome which Belisarius delivered was still the Rome of the Cæsars; but the Rome which Narses entered sixteen years later was already the Rome of the popes. And by the time it was seen that the Empire had indeed fallen, it might also have been seen that the Church was ready to take up its

work. The growth of episcopacy had given it a strong government, and its imitation of the Empire had developed a mighty hierarchy. Bishops and popes were the true successors of consuls and emperors. So the Church confronted its barbarian conquerors with the authority of this world, because it had the key of knowledge; and of the other world, because outside it there was no salvation. It was a state by itself, a City of God unchanging in the midst of earthly change. Kingdoms might rise and fall, and nations pass away, but the Church seemed to endure for ever. Even the limits of its dioceses were seldom shifted before the Revolution. And there was a reason for its endurance. Debased as it was by the asceticism and superstition of the old age, confused by the licence and disorder of the new, and filled with scandals by the unbelief which seeks assurance in things of sense and works of law, the Latin Church of the Middle Ages never quite forgot its message of a Son of God who gave his life for men, and never ceased in holy sacraments to bear witness of something better than the barbarian greed and violence with which the earth was filled.

For the present, however, the Western conception of the knowledge of God followed the lines laid down by Cyprian. One last influx of Greek thought was received through Hilary and Ambrose before the West was fairly started on doctrinal questions of its own by the Pelagian controversy. Arianism is not a great epoch in the West, for though the Latins mechanically accepted and stoutly defended the authority of the Nicene Council, their chief concern was to have the matter decided and

get to more interesting questions. More and more they crystallized the revelation into a definite law with definite commands and definite penances and satisfactions for definite sins, administered by the divinely appointed hierarchy of the visible Church, who alone could dispense forgiveness of sins committed after baptism. True, priesthood had to be extended to the presbyters, and equality of bishops abandoned when the Church became the *alter ego* of the Empire; but in other directions the lines traced by Cyprian were only deepened. The Latin Church was moving towards a state of things in which Christ was acknowledged indeed as the Giver of the law and Founder of the hierarchy, as the Giver of remission in baptism and as the future Judge of all; but in which he stood in no present personal and immediate relation to men. His Person was thrown into the background by a multitude of other mediators, his work by the belief that for sins after baptism satisfaction must be made by the merits of almsgiving, fasting, and asceticism generally. Even the Mass preached as much the wonder-working priest as the wonder itself. To this the Latin Church always tended, and to this it came at last; but the process was delayed for a thousand years by Augustine's influence.

The Greeks looked on all that we call theology as a doctrine of God, dividing it into two parts—God in himself, or *θεολογία*; and God in relation to men, or *οἰκονομία*. On this principle the ancient creeds are constructed. They speak of the Trinity, and of the Incarnation, both taken in a wide sense; and then they stop. Yet when we look at the doctrine of God in

relation to man, it is clearly twofold. There is man to know as well as God to be known, so that a doctrine of man must balance the doctrine of God, and there must still be a doctrine of revelation to connect them, so that the entire subject is really threefold. The Greeks had worked out the doctrine of God till they could get no further; and the next step was for the Latins to return upon the doctrine of man. Far on in the future the doctrine of revelation remained as a problem for the Teutons; but for the present we have the work of the Latins before us, and specially that of Augustine.

If the greatest of Western thinkers transcend like Anselm the lines of Latin thought, Augustine as the greatest of them all is much too great to be purely Latin like Cyprian. Even Origen cannot surpass him for many-sided thought. One part of his capacious mind fixed the ruling ideas of the Middle Ages, while another set the problems of the Reformation. He is the Father of Catholicism, and also of Protestantism. In Augustine the mystic thirsting for the living God meets the sceptic who lays down reason in obedience to church authority. On one side he preaches the irresistible grace of sovereign predestination, on another a law of works which seems to leave no room for predestination; on one side the assurance of the Church for salvation, on the other the impossibility of any assurance in this world for our election. All these ideas lie side by side in his writings, and it has been a work of centuries to disentangle from them the different systems of thought which have arisen in the Latin and Teutonic West from his time nearly to our own. From Augustine, Gregory VII drew

his Jacobin picture of the robbers and sons of robbers who tyrannized over men as good as themselves by treachery and murder;[1] and from Augustine, Gregory's enemies preached obedience to the powers that be. The Council of Trent followed one part of Augustine's teaching; Lutherans and Calvinists with equal reason rested on another. The Church of Rome was always restive under his supremacy, and she began to distrust him when she found that heretics could quote him against her. The ideals of the Jesuits were very unlike Augustine's insistence on truth and on personal religion, and they struck a heavy blow at his authority in the condemnation of Jansenism; but only within the last century his place as chief "doctor of the Church" has been transferred to Liguori.

In one sense Augustine made no change in the current conception of revelation. In accepting the authority of the Church he accepted once for all the system of the Church. He invented no new dogmas, and so far as he developed the old he developed them on old lines, for the West was already feeling after some such doctrines of the Church, of human corruption, and of an enslaved will as he laid down in the course of the Manichæan, the Donatist, and the Pelagian controversies. His one startling novelty was the stress he laid on predestination and irresistible grace; and even this was needed to put existing beliefs on a logical basis. In earlier times there was no doubt among Christians about free will. Western writers defended it against the Gnostics as firmly as the Greeks. Whatever the badness

[1] *Reg.* viii 21 (*Herimanno ep. Metensi*).

of man, he could always choose the good; and whatever the power of grace, he could always choose the evil. But Western thought was darkening with the darkening outlook of the world. Perhaps man's case is worse than the Greeks imagined. If he is literally shapen in wickedness and conceived in sin, he must be enslaved to sin from the first; and then comes the question, how an enslaved will can be turned to God. The natural man, who hardly knows what sin means, either does not see the difficulty, or thinks he can easily get over it by ascribing magical virtue to the ordinances of the Church. But Augustine knew too much of human nature to trifle with the question. He preferred, and on his assumption of an enslaved will he rightly preferred, to fall back on the agnostic conception of God as inscrutable power, which the Nicene decision had scarcely shaken in the West. Better make salvation a mystery than degrade it into a piece of magic. Grace, then, will take the form of predestination; and as it was not supposed that all men are saved, the predestination had to be an election of some to salvation; and further, if man can do nothing of himself, grace must be irresistible. But we must not mistake Augustine's meaning. If grace was sovereign, it was not arbitrary in the sense of acting without good reasons; and if it was irresistible, it did not for that reason reverse the course of nature or compel men to act against their will. Given Augustine's premises, that the will is enslaved and that all are not saved, the theory is logical, and in itself quite moral. It only becomes immoral when its premises are denied, or, in other words, when a part is criticized

by mistake for the whole. It has no necessary tendency to Quietism, for the better sort of predestinarians have always understood that their election was not simply to reach salvation, but "to work out their own salvation" with strenuous effort; and they have been sustained by that belief in some of the hardest struggles in history. There are difficulties enough in the theory, but not in these directions. It secures the sovereignty of God against ideas essentially irreligious like those of Pelagianism: the specifically Christian objection to it is the danger of throwing the Person of Christ into the background if election is the main thing to be taught.

That danger did not exist for Augustine himself. The decisive fact for him was that his submission to the authority of the Church came at the end of a long search for truth. He was less of a Prodigal Son than he thought, for he never quite forgot his mother's teachings, and never ceased to struggle forward, when once the *Hortensius* had roused him from a careless life. Manichæism at least helped him to see the intensity of the struggle between good and evil, though it deepened the ascetic gloom which serious men could hardly escape in that age; and the reaction from it permanently unsettled his belief that truth is rational. Ambrose led him back in the direction of the Church, and cleared up his Manichæan doubts about the Old Testament with allegorical interpretations. From Neoplatonism he learned that God is spiritual, that true communion with him is possible, and that it is not to be reached by reasoning, but by holy living and trustful self-surrender.

We cannot find God by searching, but he finds us. Neoplatonism then settled his first principle, that the knowledge of God is personal and immediate. But sad experience convinced him that such knowledge is impossible without a deliverance from sin which no philosophy can give. For this he came to Christ; but if Christ is in the Church, he must believe what the Church teaches.

We need not trace the story to the end. The point we want is that Augustine was not one of the genuine agnostics who take refuge in authority because they want to smother their doubts, and value quiet above truth. He could say, I would not believe Scripture unless the Church moved me; but he could not have said, I would not believe in my knowledge of God unless the Church moved me. He had no doubt at all of his first principle, that this knowledge is a matter of immediate and personal experience, and only came to the Church because he could not get his experience elsewhere, so that his acceptance of the church system was more of an incidental belief than he supposed. It was genuine enough, like everything else in Augustine, and deeply influenced him ; but it was not his deepest conviction. It was rather the form of his religion than its substance. At bottom, he believed on his own immediate and personal experience, not simply on the authority of the Church. In other words, the Church might be the necessary sphere of that experience, but the Church was not its necessary mediator.

Now, this conviction which Augustine established

inside the Latin Church, that the knowledge of God is immediate and personal, directly contradicted the first principle of the ecclesiastical system, that the Church is a necessary mediator, and caused an internal discord which could not fail sooner or later to break it in pieces. Once lodged, it could not be expelled. Had it been no more than the life of spiritual or personal religion, vigorous efforts might have been made to suppress it; but before long it was found also to be at the root of monasticism, and the Church could not do without the monks. They seemed the highest models of piety, carrying out boldly the ascetic ideals which the Church could not press on the world, and indeed was most unwilling to accept for itself. But if the dangerous principle could not be suppressed, it might be checked and trained. It could not do much harm unless it led to heresy, which is disobedience to the Church. So the monks were brought into the ecclesiastical system, partly by their general duty to the bishop, and partly by the special duty laid on those of them who were ordained; and they were allowed to occupy themselves with services very different from the Liturgy of the Church, but still not such as the Church had any occasion to discourage. A little mysticism was a useful outlet for unquiet spirits, and did little harm so long as it was safely caged up in a cloister. So the monks were generally on good terms with the church authorities, though their very existence was a protest of the individual against the great ecclesiastical system which threatened entirely to absorb him. Though the quarrel of seculars and regulars never ceased, it never

became fatal till the Reformation. It might have broken out earlier but for the moderating influence of the popes, who held the balance fairly even till their great change of policy in the fourteenth century.

But few men have Augustine's power of seeing different sides of a question without even seeming to know that there is any difference. Others are either more limited or more logical. Augustine's teaching held in solution so many inconsistent conceptions, that something heretical could not fail sooner or later to be precipitated from it. Thus if grace is sovereign, men might doubt whether it is always tied to church ordinances. As the call had come of old, as well to Amos the herdman as to Zephaniah the prince of Judah, so might it come now, as well to Brother Martin as to Bernard of Clairvaux. As God had taken David from the sheepfolds, and Saul of Tarsus from the midst of the Pharisees, so might he now choose Eckhart or Suso, Zwingli or Calvin, to bear the torch of truth before him. Again, if grace is sovereign, what place is left for our good works? Some might say that they are not required; but at any rate we cannot make merits of them as the Church taught we might. We cannot open a ledger account with God in the Pelagian way. Yet again, the knowledge of God which is immediate must be surer than that which only comes to us from the witness of other men. It may need to be verified by the whole man, and with reference to facts, but it must not be made nugatory by referring it solely to church teaching. And when once it is clearly verified, it must be supreme.

Augustine might be unwilling even to imagine the possibility of a conflict between the inner and the outer voice; but the Church of the Middle Ages was not so free from spots and blemishes but that the conflict was certain to arise. Then, what was to be done? If conscience is the inner voice, it is above religion, and must follow truth at any cost of unity and order. But the Latin Church has always valued unity and order more than truth. Hence the Reformation.

The composite and incoherent character of Augustine's doctrine was not laid open to much purpose in his own time. If Julian of Eclanum was a keen and merciless critic, nobody listened to him. Orthodox opponents, indeed, were not wanting. The Greek world went its own way, and its denial of predestination was represented by a strong party in Gaul. But Augustine's name remained supreme in the West; and though the later teaching of the Latin Church became essentially Pelagian, it did not lessen the formal respect paid to him. But he was very little understood in the Middle Ages. In the fifth century, indeed, when there were still some remains of the older learning, his predestination was toned down partly in a religious interest as subversive of morality, and partly in an ecclesiastical interest as unfavourable to church ordinances. But in general the most valued parts of his teaching were precisely those in which he came nearest to the ordinary Latin ideas of religion. Thus his teaching that men may win merit by their good works was better understood than his reminder that the merit was itself a

divine gift. So too his hint that there may be a purification after death was developed into a full-blown theory of a purgatory; and his refusal to ascribe actual sin to the Mother of Christ became the starting-point for the Immaculate Conception. The higher conceptions, whether derived from earlier times or thrown in by Augustine himself, were left in the background, and made no great struggle till after the tenth century, when the worst of the darkness had passed away.

We can run rapidly down at least the earlier Middle Ages, because the development we have to trace—that of the conception of revelation, ran a simple and natural course on the lines of the old Latin ideas of religion as modified chiefly by the Eastern worships and by Christianity, and in particular by the teachings of Cyprian and Augustine. The process was almost purely Latin, for the Teutons were so far learners, though they took kindly to the lurid pictures of purgatory, and helped in the fixing of tariffs for sins. Their nearest approach to independent action was the rejection of image-worship by the Council of Frankfort in 794; and this was overborne in the course of the next century.

The current beliefs have now to be summed up. God is a sort of Roman emperor who holds his court far away in heaven, and sends angels as *missi dominici* to do his work on earth. Yet if he commonly rules by law, he never hesitates at direct action in the form of miracle. There was always greed enough of marvels, especially after Gregory I; and it went on increasing, till miracle became the commonest of all signs of

holiness. No saint could be without it. Thus Marco Polo says in all seriousness that Kublai Khan might easily be converted if the pope would send a friar or two to do some miracles before him; and what is called mysticism in the modern Church of Rome is full of miraculous experiences, chiefly of a sensuous kind.

This God will some day mercilessly[1] punish every sin he finds outstanding. His mercy is not shewn by free forgiveness—Jesus of Nazareth was mistaken there[2]—but by providing us with various means of escaping our just punishment. These means are summed up in a law given once for all to the Church, contained partly in Scripture, but interpreted, completed, and sometimes reversed by the traditions of the Church. Scripture, indeed, was commonly treated as an almost uncanny[3] book of pious riddles. The learned (and there were genuine scholars and very able commentators) might get good store of edifying allegory from it; but the vulgar were sure to wrest it to their own destruction,

[1] One of my critics takes exception to this, quoting the *citra condignum* of Thomas Aquinas—that sinners deserve something worse than hell. But surely this is rather a scholastic refinement than a current belief. Common men might piously believe it justice to send sinners to hell, but I cannot find that it often struck them as mercy.

[2] It is to be noticed that free forgiveness is the main point in all the three chief parables on the subject ascribed to him—the Two Debtors, the Prodigal, the Unmerciful Servant. In each case the offender is forgiven without the smallest hint that he can offer anything in the way of satisfaction. The Prodigal certainly may have that idea when he proposes to say, Make me as one of thy hired servants: but whether he says it or not when he comes to the point, the rest of his confession is plainly enough for his father.

[3] The feeling of illiterate men is well seen in the term *sacri apices*—holy squiggles—(*e.g.* Bede, *Hist.* iv 2, though found as early as *Cod. Theod.* XVI ii 7, a law of Constantine) in the *sortes sanctorum*, and in many other superstitions.

so that in the later Middle Ages they were prudently forbidden to read so dangerous a book. It only made them heretics. However, no means of escape from hell were given but those dispensed by the Church, so it followed at once that the misbelievers and the disobedient shall without doubt perish everlastingly.

Of these means baptism came first; and without it there was no salvation,[1] for nothing else could remove the guilt of original sin, which was not caused simply by the fact of birth, but by the always more or less sinful sexual desire of the parents. This original guilt was further emphasized by prescribing repeated exorcisms of all the devils from the infant. The new life given in baptism was nourished by the Lord's Supper. The grace given in this was Christ himself, who was supposed to be present in the elements, though the particular theory of Transubstantiation did not become dominant before the Hildebrandine period, and was not fully defined till the Lateran Council of 1215, or rather was never fully defined at all, for even in its more general form a presence in the elements is one of the most ambiguous and incoherent conceptions ever devised by rationalistic presumption. Its practical influence appears in history as tending directly to a materialistic superstition; and it must be added that most of the abuses which sprang from it were actively encouraged by the authorities of the Church.

But all this is more or less theory: we come now to the working part of the system. What was to be done

[1] Exceptions were made only for martyrs and for those who desired baptism but were unavoidably hindered.

if men sin after baptism, as they always do? God might forgive sins, but he would not fail to punish them, unless he received satisfaction. Cyprian had long ago taught that almsgiving is a ransom for sin; and this was fully accepted, though its tendency is quite as bad in morals as it is in economics. But this was gradually extended to penance in the widest sense, and it was not long before tariffs were framed of such and such penances for such and such sins; and if penance was not done on earth it would have to be done in purgatory—not to mention the danger of hell. But if men undertook to judge of acts, they required to know the circumstances, and particular confession became necessary, first enforced by the Lateran Council of 1215. No sin called mortal was to be omitted. There was some academic uncertainty whether absolution remitted the sin against God or merely the crime against the Church, but there was no hesitation in practice. It was not to please the Church but to get clear of hell that men were willing to do penance; and even so, it was hard enough to make them do it, especially after the standard of ascetic severity was raised by the Hildebrandine movement. A few were only too glad to do penance, and many could be stirred to passing enthusiasms, but most men were very unwilling. So the Church was merciful. It was charity; and it was also prudence. Penance was commonly reasonable, and subject to reasonable arrangements. It might, for instance, be done by deputy, or commuted for money; a crusade or a pilgrimage, especially a jubilee, might atone for all sins, and credit for every good work was accurately given in heaven, or perhaps rather in

purgatory. At last Bonaventura and the Scotists taught that pure and simple fear of hell was a sufficient satisfaction for sin if absolution were given upon it.

Thus the most practical change in the church system during the Middle Ages was not the growth of the papacy. The pope was in most countries a distant master, and in England in particular he was not uncommonly found useful as a card to play against the king. Nor was it in the rise of Transubstantiation, important as that was, for it only expressed current belief in terms of bad philosophy. The greatest and most practical change of all was the development and elaboration of a penitential system which placed every secret of personal life at the priest's mercy,[1] and fenced it in at every turn by a scheme of satisfactions which every change made less moral than it was before.

[1] The "Seal of Confession" was not fully made inviolable till 1729. Even now we may doubt whether the secret would always be safe if the priest (say a Jesuit at the command of his superior) saw advantage to the Church in making it known, perhaps in some indirect way. In any case it is at his mercy so long as he does not tell it to a third person.

LECTURE XX.

ROME CHRISTIAN.

III.

This would seem to be a true picture, though it gives but one side, and that the lower side, of the religion current in the Middle Ages. Our concern is with the conception of the knowledge of God, and just now with its practical development, where the higher elements of religion are less conspicuous than we could wish. Of course, the best men in the Church rose above such crudities, and there were wise cautions and learned explanations in abundance to soften them. But practically these were private opinions: the crudities were much more than tolerated by the settled policy of the Church. A jubilee, for example, is not an edifying proclamation from the Vicar of Christ. The general standard of morals was therefore as low as in pagan times, and all the lower for the consciousness that there is a higher. Special pleaders can always make up a case; but unless all contemporary evidence is deceitful, there is no escape from the conclusion that the priests were largely scandalous, and the bishops not much better. Scandal is the rule and decency the exception, rather

than the reverse; and the offenders were seldom punished. Earnest bishops like Grosseteste, Rigaud, and Grandisson very commonly found that the grossest cases were shielded by the papal court.

On the other hand, there was more of personal religion than some of the zealots will allow, though certainly less than is claimed by the Romish apologists and their Anglican tail. It was not confined to the monasteries.[1] After all allowance for base motives, there must have been a good deal of genuine religion behind such scenes as the First Crusade, the capture of Lisbon, the preaching of Fulk of Neuilly, and the work of the Mendicants. But these belong to the best part of the Middle Ages. The fifteenth century is morally below the eleventh, though even the Italy of Machiavelli could not quite renounce the inborn religiousness of human nature.

Though the Latin Church as a whole must not be summarily judged by its degraded state at the end of the Middle Ages, neither may we forget that the development was continuous, and fairly worked out principles received from Cyprian and Augustine. And incoherent principles must end in confusion. The Church pursued four conflicting aims at once—the Christian aim of bearing witness to the world, the ascetic aim of renouncing the world, the political aim of governing the world, and the commercial aim of making money out of the world. At the end of the Middle Ages

[1] For example, Fulk of Anjou, Robert of France, Herlwin before he turned monk, Roger of Toesny, Gulbert and Beatrice, Tesselin and Alith, seem as good saints as most of those that were canonized.

the religion of Rome had come back to something like its condition at the end of the republic, with sceptical pontiffs who scarcely seemed to believe in their own office, sceptical philosophers who paid it formal respect, church government almost in a state of anarchy, and the common people either indifferent or sunk in superstition. In some respects things were even worse. Morals were quite as bad as in heathen times, with more of treachery and less of conscience to condemn it, with more sanction of religion for outrageous wickedness and more of sin against light. Of sin against light, for the practical religion, which was rather worse than paganism, lay side by side with a high theoretical religion, so that there was a deeper internal conflict than heathenism ever knew. The coming of light is the judgment of men; and as the best of the Middle Ages rises far above the best of heathenism, so the worst of the Middle Ages is worse than the *colluvio Neroniani sæculi.* Even paganism never laid down any such principle as that faith is not to be kept with heretics. The fires in Nero's gardens were not so much of a deliberate outrage on known truth as the burning of Huss or the battle of Varna.

But those who felt the scandal of corrupt officialism were not compelled as in heathen times to look outside the religion for something better. They could find it without ceasing to be Christians. The higher elements of religion once represented by Stoicism and the Eastern worships were recognized parts of Christianity itself, so that permission could not be refused to those who wished to cultivate them in societies of their own,—of course,

always in strict obedience to the official system. Now, the ultimate principle of the monastic life is not to be found in any ascetic practices, which were no more than the means to an end, but in the belief that access to God is individual and direct, not corporate or through a priest. The monk must work out his salvation for himself, with countenance, indeed, and comfort from his fellows; but neither the ordinances of the Church nor the rules of the monastery could give him any help that was indispensable. Else how could the hermits have been saints? Such helps he might bring to the door of the presence chamber; but before the Eternal's face he must stand alone.

But the monk was a man of his own time, and took up the conception of holiness current in his own time; and we have seen that this lay chiefly in ascetic practice. Hence the direct antagonism of his first principle to the Latin Church order was partly overlooked, and partly forgotten in enthusiastic admiration of a life which seemed to make real that renunciation of the world which the Church was not able to carry out in the midst of the world. Seemingly, and in some senses truly, the monks were not only sound and zealous churchmen, but leaders in every work of toil and danger. Times without number, for good and for evil, the monks pushed on when bishops hung back. The Benedictine movement saved religion as well as learning in the early Middle Ages, the Cluniac brought forth the Hildebrandine reformation, and the mendicants were the last creative work of mediæval religion. These three great movements are samples of many revivals which sprang from the zeal

of the laity, and made their way with sometimes more hindrance than help from the secular clergy. The monks were the mainstay of the Church.

For all this, the fact remained that while the priest stood for the corporation, the monk stood almost as much for the individual. If he submitted himself to a society, it was a society of his own choice, in whose rules he found his freedom. The monk who was in earnest knew what he wanted; and if one method was not enough, there was no inconsistency in helping it with another, or changing it for another. For a long time he relied on ascetic practice, and each new order from the Benedictine downward made a severer rule. But when asceticism had been pushed into great excesses, doubts began to arise. First come touches of mysticism before the thirteenth century, then the mendicants go forth from the cloister to preach and to work in the world they have renounced. Next comes the full-flown German mysticism, still developed on the *via negativa* by Meister Eckhart, but with many signs of something better. At last the monk abandons his asceticism at the Reformation, and comes forth to live as a Christian man in a world which was no longer given over to the devil. Brother Martin was but one of many who from mendicant frairs became preachers of the Gospel. Then came the parting of the ways. Catholic mysticism sank steadily down into empty fancies and erotic dreamings, while the mysticism of Protestantism rises through John Smith and William Law to those loftiest heights of thought where nature history and life together seem in whole and detail to become one universal sacrament of love

divine and human thankfulness, revealed indeed to reason, but discerned only by those whose hearts are pure and true.

If the Teutons contributed little to Christian thought in the first half of the Middle Ages, they made amends in the second. Much of the best of what passes for Latin thought was really Teutonic. The great thinkers, indeed, seem rather Teuton than Latin. Against Francis of Assisi, Bonaventura, and Dante we may set probably Anselm and Peter the Lombard, certainly Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas,[1] the whole school of German mystics, and especially the brilliant line of English thinkers, including Alexander of Hales and Roger Bacon, and the four great schoolmen of the fourteenth century—Duns Scotus, Occam, Bradwardine, and Wiclif. Scholasticism and mysticism were both more Teutonic than Latin, though, of course, the Latins also had great schoolmen and great mystics. Francis of Assisi stands as a mystic in some ways higher than the Germans. They agreed, further, in starting from the principle that the knowledge of God is individual and not corporate—a principle which ultimately contradicts the Latin Church system. The contradiction is none the less real if the system contained others, and none the less fundamental if it was not clearly seen, and seldom took the form of open heresy.[2]

[1] His father was related to the Hohenstaufens; his mother was a Norman.

[2] I shall not escape Harnack's condemnation (*Hist. of Dogma*, vi 99, E.Tr.) as one of "the fragmentary natures that deal in a dilettante way with religion, theology, and philosophy," for I cannot see that "a mystic who does not become a Catholic is a dilettante." Is that quite true, for instance,

Scholasticism was science born out of due time, and therefore a stunted growth. The difficulties in its way were chiefly two. In the first place, nature was very little known, and what was known of it was kept subordinate to theology. Some advances had been made since Roman times, as we see, for instance, in Adam of Bremen's account of Northern Europe and America as far as Vinland. But in the main they copied the ancients, and copied them very much at second-hand. The clear feeling of the unity of nature, which was their chief advantage over polytheism, was neutralized for the present, partly by an omnivorous greed of miracle which made natural law impossible, and partly by beliefs which enslaved life to an almost savage fear of nature. Plague and sickness, the comet and the thunderstorm, were works of the devil, and common sinners could not escape

of Whichcote, Wordsworth, or Westcott? If "Mysticism is always the same; above all, there are no national or confessional distinctions in it" (p 97), it must be rather a general view of religion than a particular system. It is not even specifically Christian, for it is found in all the higher religions, and some of the lower. It is a framework into which different men fit different doctrines, and marks out an end which different men will endeavour to reach in different ways. If it is "the expression of individual piety," it is not of necessity the Catholic expression of it—rather the reverse. "But had Catholicism no personal religion?" None, except where there was mysticism. There can be no personal religion in any age without a touch of mysticism, for there is nothing religious in a purely corporate religion, if such can be found. The Latins had mystics as great as any of the Teutons, though not so many of them. But surely the belief in a direct and personal knowledge of God is not only contrary to the general drift of Latin Church teaching, but a more primary character than the asceticism which does not pretend to be more than the best means of attaining it, and may be exchanged without inconsistency for any other means which may seem better. Mysticism can wear the Catholic uniform—or the Brahmin or the Muslim—but its fundamental principle is fundamental also in Protestantism. I cannot help thinking that Harnack is not so patient of mysticism as might be wished.

his crafts and assaults without diligent use of crossings, bells, holy water, and the rest of the talismans of the Church. Since Augustine's time, indeed, Latin thought had so concentrated itself on human nature, especially its animal side, and so despised the world, that man was really better known than nature. Thus—to take an illustration from art—we have portraits or attempts at portraits from a comparatively early time, but landscapes are not painted for their own sake till the late Renaissance.[1] And the Church which had power over purgatory and could baffle hell itself was not likely to be modest in its claims over the earth. Was not its teaching the most divine and certain of all truth? Must not heavenly truth determine the meaning of the earthly? Must not the certainties of theology control the uncertainties of science? Indeed, if we set aside a good deal of bad philosophy, bad history, bad criticism, and bad exegesis, the rest of the theology was much more scientific than the science of the time. On its own premises, it was thoroughly logical. So it was held not only that true science is consistent, as it must be, with a true revelation, but that it must be made to agree with the particular interpretation of the revelation laid down by church tradition. So the schoolmen construed everything in accordance with that tradition, and in so doing ended by destroying the rational basis of religion itself. Aquinas made shift to save it by a dualistic separation between nature and grace; but when this was found untenable

[1] Such landscapes as we find earlier are mere backgrounds of portraits. The transition is clear between Michael Angelo and Raphael, though we find it rather earlier in the Netherlands.

philosophic scepticism became as destructive in the hands of Duns Scotus and William of Occam as in those of Mansel and Newman.

The other difficulty was that method was wanting as well as material. Want of faith in nature is fatal to accurate observation, and the critical method logically involved in the claim of Christianity to rest on historical facts was obscured by the claim of the Church to be its infallible interpreter. There can be no true science except for men who give up the praises of asceticism and the gossip of daily miracles, no true criticism or history except for those who renounce the very idea of an infallible church.

The belief in idle miracles and the belief in an infallible church had a common source in the Latin conception of God as an absent sovereign who for inscrutable reasons limits his favour to one class of his subjects, and deals even with them only through certain officials who administer a law presumed on their authority to be divine. This position was directly traversed by the schoolmen who leaned to intellect, and by the mystics who leaned to intuition for the knowledge of God. It may be that Meister Eckhart got most of his ideas from Thomas Aquinas; but surely the spirit of Eckhart is different from that of Thomas, and more directly religious. To say that the mystics contributed nothing new to Christian thought is to forget that devotion has secrets as well as dogma. It is a real extension of human knowledge when forgotten or neglected truth of *any* sort is again set forth to the world. Because the first principle of mysticism is true, that the knowledge

of God is direct and personal, it could not be new as a theorem. All that Eckhart or Tauler could do was to see it in the light of a new age. Whether they got it from Aquinas or Dionysius or Augustine or St. John, or whether it was the discovery of reason, which is the revelation of God, to themselves, it had been recognized from time to time before them, and could not fail to be recognized again after them. The mystics were few, —not many men have intellect enough, or manliness enough, or piety enough, to be clear headed and fearless mystics,—and they founded no lasting school; but their witness for truth was not lost in later times.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages the Church was visibly disorganized by its victory over the world. It had forsaken its proper function as a witness and keeper, and become a judge and a divider; and the task had overstrained and demoralized it. The world could not be governed from Rome or Avignon, and the popes who claimed the right to govern could not do much more than meddle, and meddled commonly for the sake of worldly schemes and filthy lucre. They still did some good. They were a symbol of unity, and sometimes [1] a centre of resistance to the Turk, and liberal patrons of art and literature. But the good they did was far outweighed by the moral scandal of their rapacity, treachery, base use of sacred things, and evil living generally. The popes of the Renaissance were not monsters—not worse than the condottieri of their time, and some of them were very much better. Many

[1] Only sometimes, for they were as ready as France to use the Turks (and afterwards the Lutherans) against their political enemies.

of the worst charges, especially against Alexander VI, may be no better than society scandal; but no reasonable criticism can deny that most of these men were very bad, and gave fair ground for even worse suspicions. Even if a pope was personally respectable, like Hadrian VI, or Pius II when he had put away the sins of his youth, the court around him was like the crusaders in Palestine—"the whole world stank of their sins." The men who chose Alexander VI with their eyes open cannot have been much better than he was.

So the Church was in confusion, full of jealousies, disorders, and misgovernment of every sort, arising not simply from the fact that the popes had been unable to maintain good order, but from the ideas of religion which made a papacy possible. The facts alleged by the most violent Protestant controversialists go very little beyond those admitted in the report of the Commission of cardinals in 1536; and the cardinals are quite agreed with the Protestants in tracing most of them to the lawless despotism of the popes. Such is the evidence of Caraffa himself. If some of them were mere abuses of the sort for which no government can fairly be held responsible, by far the larger number were logical, natural, and unavoidable results of a fundamentally false conception of the knowledge of God. Thus, if the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory makes it a possible thing to sell grace for money, it is only logical and natural that grace should be bought for money, even if the government keeps its own hand clean. And this is a scandal which runs through the whole system.

The monks were restive. The vow of chastity had

become a ghastly scandal; most of the popes had acknowledged families—the ideal of poverty had been formally disowned by John XXII as no way necessary to Christian perfection; and though the ideal of obedience remained to be worked out by the Jesuits, the more earnest of the monks were beginning to feel, not merely the old complaint that the monastic life was not what it might be, but that even its ideal perfection fell short of what Christian life ought to be. So some turned to mysticism, some tried less ascetic forms of association, others tried to reform the Church from within, many became zealous preachers of the Reformation.

The world was restless too. Albigenses, Lollards, Hussites witness the widespread dicontent of Latin, Teuton, Slav; but one after another had been crushed out, so that there was very little open heresy at the end of the Middle Ages: but the fires of discontent were smouldering all over Europe. The Church was respected nowhere. But mere weariness of Church scandals and disgust at the rapacity of the popes were not basis enough for a serious reformation, so that when things came to a point the Italians never got much beyond jests and lampoons. Men were more in earnest beyond the Alps. They were coming to feel that the Church had betrayed its trust—that it was not merely guiding the nations badly, but misguiding them for the sake of political power and filthy lucre. New thoughts were stirring in new universities like Erfurt and Heidelberg, and needed forcible repression at Oxford and Prague, so that when Greek learning came there were many to welcome it. The commercial towns of Southern

Germany were in touch with Venice and Milan across the Alps, while the trade of the Hansa ranged over the Baltic and North Sea regions from Novgorod to London. If there was less of cultivation and refinement than in Italy, there was more of healthy life and moral purpose. While the Italians cultivated their exquisite art, and made songs on the scandalous popes, the Teutons caught glimpses of living truth. They came in doubts, hardly formulated yet in clear questions. Was the world quite as bad as it had been made out? Was there a true revelation in nature and life? If so, might not the Church be judged by it? Was the actual teaching of the Church the last word of revelation? Does God sell grace for money? Is he well pleased with formal penances? Does he allow no access but through the priests? Were the scandals and iniquities ordained of Christ? If not, might not the State abolish them, if the Church refused?

Questions of this kind were in the air. One answer was given by the Reformation, another by the Council of Trent. As our present business is with the Latin conception of revelation, we shall take the Tridentine answer first, and return to the Reformation.

We shall not need any long discussion of the modern Church of Rome, for it has contributed little new truth to the conception of revelation, or indeed to Christian thought in general. If we leave out Pascal and the Jansenists, who represent the opposition rather than the Church, and possibly some of the romanticists, the rest are singularly barren of new thought. Modern Rome can shew casuists, lawyers, politicians, preachers, ascetics, and even scientific

observers and genuine scholars. We must not forget critics like Simon and Astruc, astronomers like Secchi, the literature and art of Spain under Philip IV, the splendid labours of the Benedictines of St. Maur; but after all, the great illuminating thoughts very seldom come from Rome. She is behind the heretics in almost every branch of thought, and her greatest thinkers have commonly shewn scant sympathy with the distinctive doctrines of her religion.

Rome still stands for truth, even in some cases where she is very far gone from the truth. Her elaborate and stately ceremonial preaches the need of law and order, the awful reality of mystery, and the royal dignity of the service of a God *quem nosse vivere, cui servire regnare est*, as she says in one of her glorious old collects. Her worship of saints, gross idolatry as it is, bears witness to our need of something more human and more kindly than her conception of Christ; and even her Mariolatry may give us a reminder which is not superfluous that no combination of purely "masculine" virtues can reach our highest ideal of human goodness. Transubstantiation itself, compounded as it is of irreverent rationalism and irrational credulity, still sets forth to us what must be the fact, that whatever blessing there may be for us in this or any other ordinance, it is given of God, not manufactured by any faith of ours. Her confession and absolution is as demoralizing a system as ever was devised by the wit of man; yet this too corresponds to the plain fact that the fluctuating opinions of men (except so far as we have some assurance that they are also divine thought) are not enough to give us

that absolute and final certainty of things unseen which is the necessary basis of all clear and vigorous moral action. In the same way, though her doctrine of papal infallibility is an equal defiance of reason, Scripture, history, and all Christian belief (including her own till modern times), even this may be made to express the truth that the revelation of a living God must be a fact of the present as well as an event of the past. It may even be taken as a sort of religious reaction from the great system of dead law. But these are not Rome's own meanings: at best, they are the reveries of a few. Modern Rome speaks even truth in the spirit of untruth.

The longer a long-dreaded crisis is delayed, the more suddenly it seems to come at last. For a whole century the Church had been ringing of reformation in head and members; yet the outbreak in Germany took the papacy by surprise. The prospect had never seemed fairer than in 1517. Grim old Julius II had well and truly done his work; and the age of iron was turned into an age of gold, now that the cultured Leo X reigned in his stead. The Renaissance seemed to surpass itself in splendour. The gold of the indulgences was flowing in; and no rumour of rebellion reached the court of Rome. All the earth sat still, and was at rest. Even Bohemia seemed quiet at last, and the Vatican Council was dissolved with a shout of triumph.

Small wonder if the Roman Curia was bewildered when the whirlwind came out of the north. Leo X blundered sadly in his treatment of Luther; and the pontificate of Clement VII was as ignoble as anything since the time of Vigilius. For nearly thirty years

Rome seemed to waver strangely, while all Northern Europe fell away from her. Open enemies she might deal with in the usual way; but Charles V was clamouring, if not for reform of doctrine, at any rate for the abolition of many lucrative abuses. Nor could she quite disregard the learning and character represented by moderate men like Reuchlin and Erasmus, More and Tunstall, Cajetan and Contarini. She could not yet be sure even of some who in after years were merciless persecutors, like More and Pole. Scholars like Erasmus, and in particular Cajetan, who had learned something from his defeat by Luther, threw over wholesale the traditional interpretations of Scripture, and on many passages came to nearly the same conclusions as Melanchthon. On questions of criticism Cajetan is hardly less daring than Luther himself. If, for instance, he does not call the Epistle of James a right strawy Epistle, he none the less repudiates its professed authorship, and finds in it no support for extreme unction or for confession to a priest. So too Christ promises to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, not those of the kingdoms of the world, and gives him power to bind only on earth, not in hell or purgatory, and that not at his pleasure, but only so far as his decisions are confirmed in heaven. Luther himself could hardly have made a cleaner sweep of papal claims, though Cajetan formally reserves the papal primacy.

But was Rome going to allow free criticism and scholarship with so near an approach to the heretics? For a while it almost seemed so; but as usual she was only amusing the enemy when she let moderate men

come to the front and hold out vague hopes of a satisfactory reform, say, as soon as the necessities of the time allowed her to summon a General Council. If Paul III really meant anything conciliatory, he was soon overborne by Caraffa and the zealots. Rome was collecting her strength, reorganizing the Inquisition, establishing new orders like Barnabites, Theatines, and especially Jesuits, and waiting for heretical enthusiasm to cool into formalism, heretical freedom to discredit itself with anabaptist excesses. Then she would be ready.

In the meantime she underwent almost as much change as Lutheran Germany, though in a very different direction. A new spirit was entering the Curia; and if the excuse of zeal is not allowed to turn all crimes into virtues, there is no escape from the conclusion that it was more wilfully and more systematically wicked and inhuman than the spirit of mediæval and Renaissance popes. True, it was neither an unclean spirit nor a spirit of confusion. So far the popes of the Catholic reaction compare well with their predecessors, though the improvement was inspired rather by fierce asceticism and lust of power than by any higher moral tone. Paul IV was just as much of an unscrupulous political schemer as Julius II. Nor can it be denied that if the one duty of Christian charity was to stamp out the heretics at any cost of bloodshed and treachery, the best means of performing it was to let the pope assume a dictatorship. But whatever were the sins of Innocent VIII or Alexander VI in the way of evil living and utter worldliness, the common conscience of man-

kind has always recognized that the worst of all perversions of human nature is not in this direction, but in some such consuming passion of hatred and malice and delight in cruelty as was incarnate in Paul IV and Saint Pius V. They were men, not monsters; but few men have ever so disastrously mistaken savage passion for piety. The only excuse that will avail them is not holy zeal, but homicidal madness. It is a slander on the sixteenth century to answer that they did nothing which shocked the morality of their own time. Even Italy, the Italy of the Borgias and Machiavelli, stood aghast at their murderous ferocity, and had to be crushed into Catholic piety by a reign of terror of the Russian sort. Many Romanists, especially among the laity, hate persecution as much as any one; but many others openly lament that in these evil days the heretics are too strong to be put down as they ought to be. As regards the mind of the Church, there is no room for mistake. She may be obliged to tolerate; but any official talk of tolerance is idle till she has disowned the Syllabus and removed from her calendar Saint "Michele of the Inquisition," and a few more of the great slaughterers of heretics.

If the Council had been held in Germany soon after 1520, it would certainly have overthrown the papal administration, and perhaps considerably modified the current teaching of the Church. But with good management it might safely be allowed to meet at Trent in 1545; and the mind of the Church was beyond mistake the moment it met. Scholars might be moderate, and so might statesmen; but the Italian bishops, who

swamped all the rest, were of another temper. Very few of them knew Greek or Hebrew; their chief object was to contradict the heretics as flatly as they could. The spirit which was said to come in the legate's carpet-bag was the spirit of reckless ignorance and reckless partizanship. They began with a studied insult to the Greeks, for it was a novelty to ratify the interpolated Nicene Creed instead of the Apostles' Creed. Having aggravated one schism with the Greeks, they proceeded to make another with the Protestants. The Curia was defeated, indeed, in its endeavour to shelve the reform of abuses by getting it referred to the pope; but it was more successful in dealing with doctrine. Had there been any wish to conciliate moderate men, the greater difficulties would have been left till an agreement had been reached on some of the smaller. Instead of this, the questions of Tradition and of Justification were pushed to the front, and decided on the *non possumus* principle by the most insignificant meeting which ever presumed to call itself a General Council. Some thirty bishops, nearly all Italians, and hardly any of these men of learning (Seripando was in opposition) took upon them in the name of the whole Church to place tradition on a level with Scripture, to ratify all the books of the Vulgate unexamined, and to make its text the final appeal in controversy, however it may differ from the originals.

This was the decisive step, for it settled the whole policy of the Council. Of course, the heretics would not come. If they were invited, they were not wanted unless they came to recant. They had appealed to

a free Council, and could have no *locus standi* in a packed assembly of enemies which had condemned them in advance; and if safe-conducts were offered, the memory of Huss was not encouraging. A few of them did come some years later; but, as Lainez put it, obstinate heretics are not to be heard at all, and though "moderate" heretics may and ought to be heard, it must be on the strict condition that no doctrinal concession is to be made. Past decisions of the Council "come down from the Holy Spirit," and are irrevocable.

The Council was less unlearned in its later stages, when the Jesuits got more control of it; but the learned Jesuits were as reckless partizans as the most ignorant of the bishops. Still, they were shrewd enough to see that some of the flagrant scandals would have to be abated. At any rate, there must be no more anarchy in the Church. The result was a considerable tightening of discipline, though the Church did not cease to prefer smothering of scandals to rooting out of abuses. But there was no reform of doctrine. If there was anything that already gave offence to moderate men, the Council in most cases was only too glad to push it further.

A wise man never delivers an ultimatum till everything else has failed; but these ignorant bishops and their reckless leaders flung down anathemas in all directions. Every canon was turned into a curse: *Si quis dixerit . . . anathema sit.* Thus Justification is fenced with thirty-three anathemas, the Lord's Supper with eleven, besides nine on the sacrifice of the Mass and three on communion in both kinds. So they covered the whole field of doctrine with anathemas, each com-

prising one or more opinions. Under cover of declaring the traditional belief of the Church, they took occasion to decide many questions which till then had been left open, and usually decided in favour of the less critical opinion.

All this definition made a great change in the condition of the Church. The current system was codified; and what it gained in precision it lost in flexibility. The mistakes Rome had made before and those she made now were permanently fixed on her. Come what might, she could withdraw none of them. She chose her positions in order to hurl back the aggressive force of human reason, in the profoundly sceptical belief that in the end it would pulverize all religion, and—for her purpose—she chose them well. Rebels might break loose, and did break loose with a fierce hatred of the Church which has never been common in Protestant countries. But within the Church there could be no peaceful reform. All lines of advance but one were closed by the Council. Now that the lower side of mediæval religion had been made the authoritative teaching of the Church, the next step was to organize and develop it systematically, and to clear away the traces of higher conceptions: and this has been the work of the last three hundred years.

In fact, the Latin Church has undergone more change than the English since the Reformation,—perhaps as much change as in the thousand years before it. Schoolmen have been replaced by casuists, and mysticism is degraded into erotic silliness. The monks are subjected along with the priests to the despotism of the

bishops, and the bishops themselves to that of the pope, while the Jesuits are under despots of their own. The Council could not decide whether bishops hold their office from Christ or from the pope; but there is no doubt now.

The machine is perfect; but the bisbops have ceased to control it, and the monks have given up their protest on behalf of the individual. The Inquisition means that the life of every human being is entirely at the pope's disposal, and the confessional places every thought at the mercy of the priest. But if the Church was implacable and void of scruple with regard to heresy, she was lenient to sin. Some confessors tried to judge righteous judgment, and some were cruelly severe; but the Jesuits were kindly men who understood the weakness of human nature, and could find excuses for any sin, upon occasion turning treachery and assassination into the noblest of Christian virtues *ad majorem Dei gloriam*.

No doubt lying was a great sin, but many things commonly set down as lies were quite allowable. Thus it was not sin, or at most it was venial sin, to do what we do not think right, if casuists in a disputed number (Jesuits by preference) could be found to pronounce it venial. This was Probabilism: reserve and amphiboly (which the unlearned call equivocation) were also allowed on easy conditions. No paganism ever so systematically organized the corruption of conscience as the Church of Rome with the confessional in Jesuit hands. Even Pascal's tremendous blow was a failure. The order certainly was never quite itself again after the exposure

of the *Provincial Letters*; but the Jesuits continued to guide the Church, and the height of their power is marked by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and the bull *Unigenitus* in 1713. Even while the order sank for a while under the execration of Catholic Europe,[1] the spirit of Jesuitism did not cease to rule, and was presently canonized in Liguori.[2]

The French Revolution marks the one great shock—and the one great impulse—which the Church of Rome has received since the Reformation. Her crimes were forgotten in her misfortunes, and she could pose again as the one bulwark of society against the ungodliness and anarchy of the Revolution. So after the Napoleonic wars came Romanticism and the Ultramontane Reaction. The last century has seen a luxuriant growth of fantastic worships, unedifying miracles, and hysterical revelations,

[1] To the contention of one of my critics, that the suppression of the Jesuits was no more than a political plot of the Bourbons, it is enough to reply that neither Louis XV nor Carlos III originated it, and that in any case neither Pombal nor Leopold of Tuscany was a tool of the Bourbons.

[2] The *spirit* of Jesuitism, for Liguori was not himself a Jesuit. Mr. Leighton Pullan, *Christian Tradition*, 294, tells us that "after following for a time the Jesuit moral theology (S. Alphonsus) definitely repudiated it and ranged himself on the other side." It would have been better if Mr. Pullan had stated more exactly what Liguori repudiated, in what sense he ranged himself on the other side, or at least what practical difference he made from the Jesuit moral theology. No doubt he was not one of the Laxists; he follows Busenbaum rather than Suarez, and him not entirely: but his own followers, Gury, for instance, rank him with the Jesuits attacked by Pascal, in opposition to "the more rigid casuists of the older school." Nor does Scavini seem to think otherwise, when he claims Liguori for æquiprobabilism. In fact, Liguori's chapter *De Juramento. Dub.* 4 justifies the worst opinion of him, and makes it clear enough that he held the principle of Probabilism—that, in questions of lawful and unlawful, it is safe to follow (a greater or less number of) casuists without regard to our own conscience. Mr. Pullan's importance is that he is one of a school.

diligently encouraged by the authorities of the Church.[1] It has seen the old plea of tradition in defence of church teaching finally stultified by the proclamation and enforcement of the Immaculate Conception in the face of a confessedly divided tradition. It has seen the armies of the Church disciplined to more than military obedience, and multiplied till their mere number is a growing burden on the soil and a political danger to every government which is not subservient to their purposes. Ireland is not made desolate by English taxation, but by the locusts of religion. Above all, it has seen the pope made the infallible judge of doctrine, and practically of fact also,[2] with the divinity of the Church centred in

[1] Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church.* Till Salmon is refuted it is superfluous to produce further evidence.

[2] Personal infallibility is a tenable theory in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, because Christians believe him to have been without sin. But when we pass from the personal insight of personal sinlessness to the official action of a man who is not so far declared to be sinless, the theory becomes magical and therefore immoral.

Some have a reply that the pope cannot in virtue of his infallibility define anything contrary to the tradition of the Church. But this is ambiguous to begin with. Do they mean that if he did it, they would have a perfect right to disobey him ; or only that they are sure he will never do such a thing? Moreover, this no way limits his power to lay down anything whatever which he may think fit. Who is to decide whether his definition is or is not contrary to the tradition? If the pope himself, the limitation means nothing ; nobody suggests a Council ; and any other theory subjects him to private judgment. There seems to be no escape from the conclusion that he must decide it himself. Now, the question whether a defined doctrine is or is not contrary to a certain tradition is a question of historical fact. Will those who believe that it is contrary to such tradition be justified in refusing to accept it? If not, the inference is clear. They are bound *either* to accept it at the pope's command, without regard to the question whether it is contrary to tradition ; *or else* to accept the pope's decision that it is not contrary without regard to any evidence there may be on the other side. Either way, those who believe the pope to be infallible in *ex cathedra* definition

him as it never was before. If the old creeds are not abolished, they have long ceased to belong to the working part of the system. The battle of the Reformation was to free them from the heterogeneous traditions heaped on them in the Middle Ages, which were soon reduced to a hard and fast system by the Council of Trent; and now the Tridentine doctrine is itself antiquated by the developments of the nineteenth century. Tradition as a source of doctrine is hardly less obsolete than Scripture, now that the personal infallibility of the pope has placed it in his power to make any other ground of belief superfluous, or at best secondary.

As a Church the Latin Church is dead—dead in the same sense as the Church of Annas and Caiaphas was dead. I am quite willing to believe that strange worships like that of the Sacred Heart or our Lady of wherever it be sometimes answer to real religious needs, as did those of Isis and Mithras in an age when Roman belief was nearly in the same state as now, and that their prevalence may be accounted for and to some extent excused in the same way. Nor do I for a moment doubt that the Church of Rome can still shew men who would be a credit to any religion. The Spirit of Truth can work through everything but *personal* untruth. But paganism can shew such men too, so that so far there is nothing to choose. All the evidence points to the conclusion that these men derive their goodness rather from the common stock of religion than

of doctrine are logically bound to treat him as infallible also on relevant questions of fact. How far they actually do so is a question on which we need not enter.

from the particular additions with which the Church of Rome has overlaid it. Her peculiar doctrines would seem in most cases to give small help to goodness, but rather hindrance, especially to the paramount virtue of truth; and, in fact, many of the best men of her communion, from Pascal to Lord Acton, have been more or less out of sympathy with them.

Besides this, an infallible Church is of necessity "irreformable," or, in plain language, incorrigible. The future evolution of its doctrine now depends on the action of future popes; and that is largely beyond prediction, though we are not unlikely to hear something more about St. Anne, St. Joseph, the Sacred Heart, the *de fide* necessity of the temporal power, and suchlike. But while we cannot safely say what they will do with their infallibility, there is one thing we can say for certain they will not do. It is the idlest of idle dreams to imagine that they will ever use it to reverse the long evolution of Latin Christianity. No reform is possible —only revolution. An infallible Church must go on setting truth and reason at defiance in intrigues for political supremacy, till she either breaks in pieces, or withers away, or sinks into some gulf of anarchy. Meaner Churches may repent and amend; but for Rome reform is suicide.

LECTURE XXI.

THE REFORMATION.

The end of the Middle Ages is like—and very unlike—the end of the Roman Empire in the West. We see a similar exhaustion of the old ideas in politics, education, and religion. The successors of the Hohenstaufens had ceased to govern like the successors of Theodosius, and the new nations were in perpetual danger of anarchy. Scholasticism was run dry, and the successors of Duns were well on the way to be ridiculed as dunces. And if Christian Rome had attempted more in the way of religion than heathen Rome, her failure was all the more shameful. If literature and art had made a great advance between the eleventh century and the fifteenth, morals and religion in Italy had rather gone backward. Vice and crime were as rampant as before the Hildebrandine reformation, and there was less conscience to condemn them. Things were not so bad away from Rome, and they were all not bad even in Italy; but the fact remains, that the Church was the chief demoralizer of the world. She had guided it for centuries, and this was her account of her stewardship.

For all this, the fifteenth century was very unlike the fifth. It was not at all an age of economic exhaustion

and ascetic ideas; and government and religion are never quite bankrupt till they come to these. If the land was overcropped and needed rest, as it did in England, commerce was advancing by leaps and bounds, and stretching out towards new worlds in America and India. Nor was the spirit of the time ascetic. Saints of the mediæval sort were scarce, and colleges were built instead of monasteries. Secular life was no longer abashed before the religious, but stood boldly on its own merits, and was often quite willing to be naked and not ashamed. There was a growing feeling, at least in Germany and England, that the family and the state are as holy as the cloister; and if the Italian Renaissance contained much that was frankly heathen, the heathenism brought to light a good deal of old truth which the Church had forgotten. If the guiding ideas of the Middle Ages were exhausted, thought itself was more active than ever, for there can be no stagnation in an age which draws inspiration from the living thought of Greece. The beliefs of scholars were sure to filter downward, and Plato has always been the forerunner of the New Testament. For neither was Christianity outworn. It had only got into a groove of Latin sectarianism, and needed to be lifted out of it. Churches which looked beyond Rome to the older literature of Greece and Israel soon shewed abundant power to develop systems of thought and types of piety unknown to past ages. The advance in the conception of revelation since the fifteenth century is almost entirely due to northern thinkers.

The first principle of the Reformation was the old

belief that the knowledge of God is direct and personal. Any man may help us with ghostly counsel and advice, and any man may assure us that sin is forgiven, and Christ's ministers have power and authority so to help and assure us; but neither Church nor priest can do more than bear witness of truth, and warn us that we shall refuse it at our peril. The Church is commissioned to be a witness and keeper of truth, but not its judge or its interpreter. If the knowledge of God is direct and personal, it must in the end be a personal experience depending on personal character, not on any action of other men. Church ordinances may have a great value in influencing that personal character; but as *ex opere operato* rites they are worthless.

This is the side of Augustine's teaching which the Latin Church never greatly cared to develop. It survived, for there is no personal religion without it, and there was plenty of personal religion in the Middle Ages; but the official teaching chiefly went on other lines. If monks and ascetics lived by it, they made it no more than one principle among others, and in any case the example of such holy men was not supposed to be binding on the world of sinners. The Reformers were the first who endeavoured to secure its primacy by clearing away doctrines and institutions plainly inconsistent with it.

This principle is the common source of the Lutheran doctrine of Justification, of the Calvinistic Predestination, and of the English appeal to the true meaning of Scripture determined by sound learning. It is quite true that the Reformers never fully understood it, and

that their successors even now cherish many ideas more or less opposed to it. For instance, they took over persecution from the Latins, and needed time to find out that it cannot be justified except by the church infallibility they had renounced. For them it was an inconsistency of a first century, not the fixed policy of ages. Some, too, turned the letter of Scripture into a more rigid law than the decretals, while others decried reason, and made the knowledge of God purely emotional,—as if there could be a personal knowledge without an element of reasoning. Others again in one age turned it into a jangle of scholasticism, and in another into a wilderness of mechanical criticism,—as if there could be a personal knowledge without an element of feeling. Yet another set relied on justification or election, and gave themselves up to "wretchlessness of most unclean living,"—as if there could be a personal knowledge without moral action to accord with it. It was a sad scene; yet it was quite natural. New truth is always a sword of division; and when it is a far-reaching principle which leaves no human thought unaltered, we must expect the old to struggle against the new for centuries. There must be fears within as well as fightings without for a long time before its meaning is fully seen. The common argument from "The variations of Protestantism" is a monument of stupid scepticism and partizan frivolity.

It is true again, as Harnack reminds us, that a principle is not of itself enough to constitute a system. It is rather a foundation on which different systems may be built; and this particular principle was differently worked out in each of the three great Reformed Churches.

Luther was by nature the most conservative of men. He sums up his life in his answer to the Diet at Worms. "Here I stand; I can do no otherwise. God help me. Amen." He *could* do no otherwise: necessity was laid on him. His whole being bore the impress of the mighty struggle which had forced him to see that the knowledge of God cannot be won by works of law, but is freely given to the loving trust which St. Paul calls faith—for Luther never meant to degrade faith into orthodoxy like the Latins. "The vision of God is the call of the prophet"; and Luther had more of the old Hebrew prophet in him than almost any man of modern times. Under the august compulsion of that which he had verily known of God, he went on from one step to another, not knowing whither he went, but struggling against each move till truth would no longer allow him to struggle. He began with the flagrant scandal of indulgences, in the full belief that the pope would abolish it as soon as he heard of it. He tried to lean on the authority of Councils, till Eck drove him from it. Slowly and reluctantly he swung round to the conclusion that the pope is Antichrist, and the whole system no better than that of the Pharisees. And when Luther did move, he never looked round him, but pushed forward with all his might. So he never had a system, and indeed was not enough of a philosopher to see any need of one. He carries out his principle without flinching when any spiritual scandal compels him; but he never thinks of examining how much further it ought to take him. So his teaching is occasional and unsystematic, and leaves untouched a

good many current ideas quite opposed to its essential principle.

If Luther is a sinner rejoicing in deliverance from sin, Calvin is a philosopher seeking truth. If he had little of Luther's burly animal nature, he was not unkindly, and far surpassed him in organizing power and in consistency of thought. With Luther everything is forced on him by practical needs; with Calvin everything is reasoned out as part of a system. They were fully agreed in the general conception of religion, that the knowledge of God is a divine gift, not a thing which man can win for himself, and that it is directly given. But they reached their conclusion in different ways, and laid the emphasis differently. Luther had learned the weakness of man in his great struggle to earn the knowledge of God by works of law, so that the theoretical question of predestination gives place to the practical question of the means by which a man can lay hold on grace. This he found in faith; but as the natural man is wholly enslaved to sin, it follows that faith itself must be a divine gift. Here, however, Luther was not clear: he admitted predestination, yet maintained that grace might be rejected. Calvin was more consistent. If man is helpless, God must do everything. Predestination is sovereign,[1] and saving grace is irresistible. Such grace as can be rejected is not given to save men, but to aggravate their sin. Some are predestinated to life, and some to damnation, and their works are good or evil

[1] Acting on "counsel secret to us." Calvin, *Inst.* III xxii 2, carefully explains that God is not an "absolute and arbitrary power," as the Romanists maintain.

accordingly, so that their salvation or damnation is just. If the world is a *massa perditionis,* we must not complain because some are left to the punishment they deserve, but set it down to pure goodness that some are saved from it.

Well, this is at any rate logical. Given Calvin's postulate that God is sovereign and inscrutable will, there is no fault to be found with his conclusions. This is an old conception. It dominates Islam, and in Christianity has struggled in all ages against its fundamental doctrine, that so God loved the world. In fact, Calvin took it over from the Scotists. Had he supposed the divine will to be necessitated as well as inscrutable, the system would have been pantheistic, for he did make it the only effective will in the universe. But Calvin maintained for God as jealously as the Hebrew prophets the freedom he denied to man. But now, if God is sovereign in the sense of doing everything, he must have prescribed the means of grace and organized them in a church as concrete as the papacy itself. Hence we come to a theocracy in sharp contrast with the "Erastianism" of the Lutheran and English Churches. Calvinism in this comes near the Church of Rome. It endeavoured to confront the State as an independent if not superior power, claimed divine appointment for its form of government, and long strove to control private life by rigid discipline. How much time has abated from these claims I will not venture to determine; but so far as Protestantism has had quarrels of Church and State, they have nearly always been connected with the Calvinism of the Church, or a party in the Church. Yet even here

Calvinism differed greatly from Rome. The Church was not limited by baptism but by predestination, which at any rate calls for a personal religion. So it declared itself subject to Scripture, and made no pretence of infallibility. Its claim of independence in spiritual things rested on its divine mission, and did not imply that the State is profane. So Rome was confronted with a theocracy almost as imposing as her own, expressing a much higher conception of revelation. Rome balanced Pelagianism with magic, and missed both the divine and the human side of it. Calvinism did more justice to the divine side, and made no greater failure on the human. It was logically the first step (and a great step) away from Rome; and if it remained content with a limited Church and a limited election, all that can be said is that it failed, like the rest of the Western Churches, to reach the Christian teaching that Christ should taste of death for every man.

In England the Reformation ran another course. It was less of a popular movement than in Germany, though more so than in Sweden. So the mark of "Erastianism" was firmly stamped on it from the outset, and no great Puritan protest arose till it was fairly settled. It was a slow process, with several ups and downs. The nation which interposed in 1553 to set Mary on the throne interposed again in 1558 to say that the fires in Smithfield were bad arguments, and must be stopped; but it only became definitely Protestant during the long peace of Elizabeth. It was a new nation that confronted Spain in 1585.

If the leaders of the English Reformation were not

great men like Luther and Calvin, they were men of learning, with much width of view and singular caution in avoiding rash decisions—such hindrances for the future as the Council of Trent manufactured wholesale. Thus they never attempted to define inspiration; and though they were nearly all Calvinists in doctrine, they somehow stop short of binding Calvinism on the English Church. So they command infant baptism as being "in very good accord with Christ's institution,"[1] but they do not say that it *is* Christ's institution. So too they require us to accept episcopacy as a good and lawful form of government; but they certainly did not believe it to be of divine obligation; and even the revisers of 1662, who mostly did so believe, resisted the temptation to make their private belief the authoritative doctrine of the Church.[2] These revisers made some mistakes and shewed a bad temper; but upon the whole the claim of moderation with which the Liturgy begins is true.

Of existing churches, I believe there is none which in its official teaching (I do not mean in partizan versions of it) presents a clearer front to the future than the English; and this, I think, will appear from the nature of its final appeal. That appeal is not to the Fathers, to the Councils, to the first six centuries, to the undivided Church, or to any sort of Christian opinion, except as witnesses that the English doctrine is not of modern invention. Agreement with certain decisions of certain

[1] Art. xxvii—most clearly in the Latin, *ut qui cum Christi institutione optime congruat.* It would be hazardous to turn the superlative into a comparative, and the English does not require us to do so.

[2] All that is said of non-episcopal orders is that the Church of England no longer recognises them as a qualification for its own ministry.

councils implies no acknowledgment of their authority, for the chief declaration made about General Councils is that they may err, and sometimes have erred, even on the gravest questions. So too Churches have erred, and the Roman Church in particular. Even when the creeds are in question, the only reason given for believing them is that "they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture." Of course, even Rome can quote her Vulgate (for she forbids any appeal to the original), but she quotes it only as an ornamental flourish. She rests her proofs on her own decisions of what it is to mean, and those decisions are made with small regard to reason and scholarship. In the English Church no judge is constituted, so that the appeal is to the sense of Scripture determined by sound learning. Thus the candidate for priests' orders promises "to be diligent in reading of the holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same"; and is charged to be "studious in reading and learning the Scriptures, and in framing his manners according to the rule of the same Scriptures."

But on what ground is Scripture so declared supreme? Because it is "God's word written." That is to say, because it is a revelation, and the revelation with which the Reformers chiefly had to do. But there is no reason to think that they ever supposed it to be the only revelation, and indeed they could not without contradicting Scripture itself, which constantly appeals to revelations of God in nature, history, and life, and is self-convicted if it does not rest on these. But if such revelations are real, they must be as much God's word

as any that may be given in the particular form of writing. If and so far as anything is God's word, that must be supreme over a Church which is forbidden "to ordain anything contrary to God's word." Unless, therefore, some peculiar value be attached to the form of writing, the supremacy of Scripture proclaimed by the English Church fairly resolves itself into the supremacy of revelation howsoever known. Of course, a Church which calls itself Christian must have its limits like any other society, for it cannot without ceasing to be Christian compromise the alleged historic facts which plainly constitute the substance of the Gospel. These, however, are all that the English Church imposes on the layman; and if these can be accepted it is not easy to see how any serious student can want more than this emphatic blessing on all sound learning that bears on Scripture, and this unreserved appeal to revelation howsoever known, which must include all facts which have to do with religion, and therefore all facts whatever.

The Reformation is out of fashion in England at present. Catholics (Roman and Anglo-) hate it with a perfect hatred, and have flooded the country with publications of which it is enough to say that even when the facts alleged are true, the way in which they are presented is commonly unjudicial, misleading, and untruthful. For instance, witch-burning is denounced as if the enormity were peculiar to Protestantism. Calvin burned Servetus; therefore he is a devil. S. Carlo Borromeo burned heretics wholesale; but we must not bring up trifles against a saint. Every story that can be made to tell against the Reformers is greedily devoured, and

when even Romish evidence on the other side cannot be evaded, it is summarily rejected. I make no excuse for witch-burning or heretic-burning by either side, and I quite admit that the burning of Servetus was a particularly bad case of personal hatred; only, it is hypocrisy to denounce one party for the wickedness which is wilfully ignored or studiously palliated or even made a merit in another; and Mahomet was not far wrong when he sent the hypocrites to the lowest hell of all. In another direction, the active enemies of religion seem to feel that some sorts of Protestants are their most dangerous opponents. The Catholic (Roman and Anglo-) rests as much on philosophical scepticism as they do, so that he falls an easy prey whenever they can get him to reason on it; but a man who knows what Protestantism means at once disputes the agnostic position common to both, that we can have no direct knowledge of God.

If the attack is manifold and eager, the defence is often lukewarm. There is a false liberalism which will not see that the questions in dispute are vital, a false charity which confesses our own sins from the housetop while absolutely refusing to believe any evil of the Church of Rome, a false piety which revels in æsthetic worship without regard to truth. We have also had it well impressed on us that Protestantism implies an unhistorical theory of inspiration, an immoral theory of predestination, and an ignorant fanaticism against everything artistic, cheerful, and truly devotional. No wonder if we are more than half ashamed of a doctrine so boorish and profane.

Nevertheless, it seems historically clear that most of the distfnctive good work of modern times must be traced back to the Reformation, and that the impulse it gave is not yet exhausted. By sweeping away a vast number of irrational superstitions and abuses, it cleared the way for better things to follow. By asserting the goodness of the world, it drew the sting of asceticism; and by maintaining the holiness of the state and the family, it gave the sanction of religion to all life that is innocent. By transferring the lead of Christian thought to the Teutonic north, it brought into religion a more serious and truthful spirit, and a bolder outlook on the world. Shortly, by overthrowing the catholic conception of the Church, it removed the chief obstacle to the growth of political freedom, to the scientific and critical study of nature and history, and to the rise of new and higher ideals of religious life.

All this marks an enormous advance on the Middle Ages; but we must look beyond the turbid sixteenth century to see the fuller meaning of the Reformation. Friends and enemies in different ways exaggerate the changes it actually made, and overlook the greater changes it logically involved and actually brought about, beginning with religion, but gradually covering the whole range of human thought. Men may catch sight of a great principle at once; but they always need one generation, and often several generations, of wavering and inconsistency before they can master its bearings and carry it out with steadiness.

So the principle of Protestantism—that the knowledge of God is direct and personal—was seen by Luther

with the vivid insight of a prophet, though not in all its bearings; but the scribes who followed him lost sight of it. The English reformers were not so clear as Luther. They saw that the priest is not the indispensable mediator which the Latin Church had made him; but more than this they did not see steadily. So little did they understand their own principles, that they did not even attempt to abolish the act *de hæretico comburendo.* They had the English instinct of conservatism, and the English distrust of enthusiasm; so that their personal temper fell in with the political and controversial influences of the time, and helped to bring forward the institutional character of the Church, and to obscure the mystical side of religion. It is this institutional character, this emphasis on *Common* Prayer, this ignoring of separate devotion in public worship,[1] which makes the Elizabethan Church a firm link between the legalism of the Middle Ages and the moralism of the eighteenth century. But if the personal or mystical side of Religion is faintly marked in the Reformers and their next successors, it is as essential a part of Protestantism as the institutional, so that it came out strongly a little later, as in the Quakers, George Herbert, and many of the Puritans, and since then has always been represented, both in the Church and in the sects.

[1] The Book of Common Prayer presumes throughout that the people are following the public services, not farcing them with manuals of private devotion. Thus the command that the priest shall break the bread "before the people" is meaningless unless the people are intended to look on and see him do it.

The change in the ideal of worship is significant. At the Reformation it was argued on the Romish side that the public service ought not to be understanded of the vulgar, because it disturbed their devotions.

Though the meaning of the Reformation was for a long time very imperfectly understood, the latter part of the sixteenth century was a splendid period on both sides of the North Sea, and even the England of Charles II had far more promise for the future than the France of Louis XIV. But if we look round Europe soon after the Peace of Westphalia, or better perhaps in the few years of comparative quiet which followed the English Restoration, we cannot help seeing that Protestantism has fallen far short of its early promise. It is firmly settled in England, Scotland, and Scandinavia, thoroughly rooted out of Spain and Italy, defeated in France though tolerated a little longer, and holds only the northern half of Germany and the Netherlands. Instead of reaching south to the Alps, it has been rolled back half way to the Baltic, and forced to defend its last intrenchments along the dykes of Alkmaar and the walls of Stralsund. If it recovered the north at Breitenfeld, it lost the south at Nördlingen. The Thirty Years' War ended in a drawn battle of religion, and a general scramble of the politicians for the spoils of Germany.

Nor was its internal condition much better. There was no stagnation indeed in Germany. Thought was intensely active, and was not limited to theological controversies. Some of it seems very modern—more modern, perhaps, than anything of the same date in England. Thus Valentin Weigel is an idealist who reminds us that true knowledge comes from within, not from without; from the mind, not from the object; the Kantian doctrine of the uselessness of the historical Christ might almost have been copied from the fanatics of the sixteenth century: and

even the Hegelian triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis was partly anticipated by Jacob Böhme. But discord and reaction were rampant. Lutherans and Calvinists, and even parties among them, hated each other as much as they hated papists, and the Carolines in England looked coldly on all of them. Lutheranism soon lost the free spirit of its founder, and gradually settled down into a rigid orthodoxy of Protestant scholasticism, which differed from the Romish chiefly in requiring a particular assent to the Reformers instead of a general assent to the Fathers. Spener and the Pietists might be narrow, but there was need for their reminder that orthodoxy is not the whole of religion. Geneva was in much the same state, for the relaxation of discipline brought no relief to the rigidity of doctrine. England was in a somewhat better case, for the wisdom of the Reformers and the good sense of the English people softened and limited the controversies. The Stuarts, no doubt, were foreigners in England from first to last, a perpetual disgrace and danger to the country. The wise reforms of the Commonwealth were undone, and its endeavours to consult the interests of the whole nation were given up, when the king and the Church and the squirearchy came to their own again. The Restoration was bad for the labourers and the townspeople as well as for the dissenters. And the Church and the squirearchy were drunk with loyalty, acting like flunkeys, and trying hard to persuade themselves that they were no better than flunkeys. They did themselves injustice, for at bottom they were true to Protestantism and to the liberties of England, as James II found to his cost when even

Compton and Trelawney[1] turned against him. Bad as things were, they might have been much worse. The squirearchy had no very lofty aims; but it was not unfeeling like the French noblesse. With all its faults, it never forgot that it had some duties to the people it governed.

Clearly, the Reformation had not gone far enough. But this does not mean that all would have been well if a few more ceremonies had been abolished. We must look through forms of worship and forms of government to the conception of revelation behind them; and this we shall find more Latin than is commonly supposed. One of the great difficulties in the study of history is to remember its continuity. When we come to some such an upheaval as the French Revolution, we are tempted to imagine that it made a clean break in history. We allow some new names to blind us, and fail to see that Napoleon's administration was in the main a restoration of Louis XIV's. So with the Reformation. Great as the change was, we fancy it even greater than it was, and underestimate the continuity of thought between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In general, the Reformers were sober men, from the Calvinists on the right to the English on the left. The fanatics who wanted changes made without practical reasons were not very many, and seldom got the upper hand. And here it is worth notice that the Calvinists, who went more by theory than the others, and made

[1] Compton of London had borne arms; Trelawney of Bristol had helped much to suppress Monmouth's rebellion; Mews of Winchester had done both, but he is less important.

greater changes in the worship of the Church, departed less than others from the fundamental ideas of the Middle Ages; while the English, whose liturgy and polity are the Roman cleared of superstition and otherwise much improved, are in principle the furthest removed of all from the Latin rendering of Christianity.

To sum up shortly, the Reformers perceived that the authority claimed for the Church by the Latins is not justified by Scripture, by history, or by experience; and therefore they disowned it. But they did not so clearly see that they could not set practical religion on a new basis without remodelling the whole conception of revelation. So, after some hesitation, the second or third generation simply put Scripture in the place of the Church, and tried to go on as before. Luther's own doctrine was that the witness of the Holy Spirit guarantees the message of salvation contained in Scripture; and we need not quarrel with his theological language, for he meant just what we have called a personal knowledge as opposed to the orthodox belief of a purely intellectual (and therefore essentially sceptical) assent to doctrines received on authority without regard to verification by personal experience. But in the next century the Lutheran divines transferred the guarantee from the message of Scripture to its form and words. Buxtorf had learned from the rabbis the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel-points, and the new idea of verbal inspiration (taken over from the Pharisees) was soon extended to the Greek Testament, and sometimes almost to Luther's translation. Thus the infallible Church wielding an oracular Bible is replaced by an infallible

Bible as the final judge of truth. In justice, however, to the Protestants, we must add that when once they had got their infallible text, they studied it too polemically, indeed, and too much in the old style as a string of oracles, but with infinite diligence and with the best criticism of the time. It is not accidental that the highest school of religion in England in the seventeenth century came chiefly from the Puritan College of Emmanuel. Puritan study of Scripture might be narrow; but it was laborious and earnest, and liberal in the sense of using all attainable helps, and therefore it was a good soil for still better things to grow upon.

An infallible Bible demands orthodoxy like an infallible Church: so the faith without which there is no salvation became a right belief in the infallible words, instead of a right disposition towards God. Religion was emptied of its ethics at a stroke. If there was too much of this in England, there was a good deal more in Germany, where the Lutheran divines devoted infinite labour to fitting out the Church with a complete panoply of dogma. But given the system of dogmas, what was their relation to God? They were simply the things he had been pleased to set forth for our belief. Here was the old Scotist distinction between God's will and His nature. The Calvinists saw the mischief, and tried to bring the two together; but without success, for when they made God's will inscrutable, they also made it supreme. Socinians and Arminians did not get so far as this, for they accepted the distinction, and by consequence made the divine commands quite arbitrary.

The old Latin spirit had once more shown its power

over the natural man. The Protestants of the seventeenth century had fallen back into an attitude like that of their ancestors in the fifteenth. Right belief was the great thing: right living was of less importance. This is not meant for a slashing generalization, as if it was the whole truth, but simply to state what was the official tendency, especially in Lutheranism, and upon the whole the strongest tendency. There were other tendencies even in the fifteenth century; and there was much more personal religion, and that of a higher type, in the seventeenth. With all its faults, the age of Gerhard and Calixtus is a great advance on that of the Councils of Constance and Basel; but upon the whole, the most general and the official tendency was to a purely intellectual orthodoxy.

As usual, it was carried to the greatest excess in Germany, where every divine brought out a new *systema*. The Lutheran Church tradition was becoming as rigid and as infallible as the Romish. In England there was not so much of this, for England has almost always been less Latin than Germany. She never came under the spell of the Holy Empire, never had close relations with Italy, and could usually confront foreign interference with a stronger native government. Nor had the strife of King and Parliament been anything like so demoralizing as the grim devilries of the Thirty Years' War. Moreover, though Puritanism was the mock of the court, it was not much weakened as a moral power in the country by the Restoration. It still inspired thousands with earnest and courageous purpose. And earnest and courageous purpose was no monopoly of Puritans. Even Sheldon

could rebuke a king. Yet formal orthodoxy ranked far too high. The articles of faith might be fewer than in Germany, and they varied from party to party; but they were enforced. The man was unsound who doubted of election and the Sabbath, or of passive obedience and the divine right of bishops; and he was an outcast from all parties if he denied the authority of Scripture as a book of oracles, or disputed any of the miraculous narratives contained in it. Thus even England was no more than a partial exception to the general tendency of Protestant orthodoxy to become a system nearly as rigid and burdensome as the Romish, though less attractive and less imposing. In one respect its yoke was distinctly heavier than the Romish, for it would have nothing to do with that *fides implicita* which allows every Romanist below the rank of a bishop to sum up his creed in the single article of belief in whatever the Church believes.

LECTURE XXII.

MODERN THOUGHT.

I.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century the problem of our own time comes in sight, and we get a clear view forward. Protestantism had overthrown a church order which stereotyped a low conception of the knowledge of God; but it had not been able freely to develop a higher one, and was now in no little danger of falling back upon the lower. Then what was to be done? If the orthodoxy of Calovius and Carpzov did not worthily represent religion, how was it to be reformed? or what was to be put in its place? Of all the noisy voices clashing round it, which bade fairest for the future? There was ample choice, for hardly a conception of religion which men have ever formed was absent from the chaos of the time. Answers to the question reduce, I think, to four; and to these four we can trace nearly all the intellectual developments of later times. Two of them belong to the old order, retaining the old conception of God as inscrutable, and the old conception of revelation as a positive law embodied in the Bible or the Church, and cherishing the old

distrust of reason, and therefore more or less returning, though often unconsciously, to the old hopeless task of building religious belief on philosophical scepticism. The other two are of a newer type, refusing to let the religious interest absorb all others, and frankly accepting the guidance of reason, though sometimes to a complete rejection of theology.

It was possible, in the first place, to meet this one-sided intellectualism of Protestant orthodoxy by laying on feeling a one-sided stress which, as we now see, limited even the better sort of men more than they knew, and was in continual danger of being pushed by others into great excesses. There was some reason for the English distrust of what in the eighteenth century was called enthusiasm. To this class belong Pietists, Methodists, Evangelicals, revivalists in general, and some of the mystics. There is a good deal of variety among them, for they are men of their own time, who deliver their message in the language of their own time. They may be churchmen or sectaries, Calvinists or Arminians, scholars or uneducated. Some, too, went further than others. Spener was usually moderate; and a very little study of John Wesley as a politician or as a general observer will shew one of the sanest minds of the eighteenth century;[1] and they both had unruly followers to keep in order. But in their chief message there is an impressive monotony. It

[1] Wesley made mistakes in politics; but there are fine samples of political good sense in his private letter to Lord North, and in his discussion of the panic cry—England is destroyed—in the dark time of 1780.

is the old word ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth, Ye must be born again; and surely they were right in teaching that what does not touch the heart is worthless as a religion. If there is a God, and if there be such a thing as right feeling towards him, then plainly neither learning nor right belief nor works of law will do instead of it.

These men have been the prophets of the modern world. Many a time their preaching has been like streams of water in a barren land of orthodoxy and formalism. Many a time they have gone down among the outcasts of England, and made them into self-respecting men, fearing God and eschewing evil. They have been foremost in the war against public wickedness and wrong—say, the abominations of the old prisons, the iniquities of the slave trade, the oppressions of the truck system, the sordid cruelties of the old factories. They have been foremost also in every good work of social help, from the modest beginnings of the Pietists at Halle to the mighty rescue agencies working round us now. It is the fashion to sneer at them; but no man who cares for truth can fall in with it. Darwin for one did not despise their mission work. Perhaps these men had more of earnest purpose and less of maudlin sentiment than we ourselves—I mean, in England—have shown in the general debasement of the last twenty years. There is just one thing worse than the open and outrageous wickedness they strove against; and that is the open and shameless admiration of admitted wrong which seems more common, and is certainly more blatant, in our own time than it was in the time of William IV.

Nevertheless, neither did these men represent religion worthily. They gave its depth, but neither its breadth nor its height. They carried over from the Middle Ages more hindrances than they knew. Their distrust of everything they called worldly was not like the strictness of the Puritans, mainly a refusal of definite things for definite reasons, but a vague fear of evil in every occupation that was not directly religious. It rested on a mediæval dualism of sacred and profane, and was near akin to the mediæval contempt of the world and the petty legalism and petty selfishness—"Let me save my own soul"—of the monastery, though it sprang rather from timidity than from selfishness or conscious asceticism. It caused them to mistake or undervalue much that was good in the world around them, darkened life with a good deal of needless and unchristian gloom, and gave rise to many finicking scruples whose absurdity was painfully clear to everyone but themselves. Their religion, like the Latin, began and ended in religion, and brought "secular" things into no organic connexion with spiritual. So they were more or less cold to the great natural relations of life. Church and state they viewed rather as their sphere of work than as means of training divinely given to them. Quite in the spirit of the eighteenth century, they spoke of probation rather than training, and rather accepted them as facts than referred them to fundamental needs of human nature. They saw rather a divine command enjoining them than a divine revelation through them. As regards the family, though they were far from the asceticism which counts it pure and simple hindrance

to the higher life, they so often and so morbidly dwelt on the responsibility of bringing into the world and training immortal souls, that I think St. Peter would have rebuked some of them, not for having care, but for not casting all their care upon God. Their religion had still too much of the Latin introspection, and therefore too much of the Latin spirit of fear.[1]

Again, they inherited from the Middle Ages their conception of Scripture as a book of oracles, which means that reason cannot judge of it; and from the Reformation their belief in its supremacy, which means that reason must judge of it: and they never cleared up the contradiction. They got saving truth from it; and if it saved their souls from hell, they need not care what human learning had to say of it. Their distrust of reason was real, but they did not base their system on it like the Tractarians. Their especial distrust was rather of the philosophy, the science, the criticism which furnish materials for the work of reason. They were not without men of culture and learning,—John Wesley, for example, was one of the best-read men of his time, — but their general tendency was not that way. They were essentially men of the eighteenth century, with the limitations of the eighteenth century. The "plan of salvation" they preached was as clear and full of common sense as Matthew Tindal's Deism, and as characteristically wanting in a sense of mystery. Only so could men of such genuine religious feeling

[1] Is there not, for instance, a relic of mediæval asceticism in the idea that the atoning element of Christ's death consisted in a certain *quantum* of suffering?

have failed to see that if there be a true atonement it must be something more than a crude substitution or a legal fiction, and that it is hardly reverent to count up the converts of an evening in revivalist fashion like a bag of game.

But enough of faultfinding. When we put these movements in a series we find a distinct advance; and the advance of the last generation has been enormous. We hear less about hell-fire, verbal inspiration, and vicarious punishment. The old crudities are softened, there is a brighter and freer spirit among them, and the old distrust of learning is much abated. It was unjust even sixty years ago to call them an unlearned party; and it is now ridiculous. If ever the full power of religion is to be brought to bear on the mass of the people, these are the men who will have to do it. Evangelicals and nonconformists are still the backbone of serious religion in England, and its future chiefly depends on their willingness to receive new truth from the world around them; and of such willingness there are many hopeful signs. If they will only thank God and take courage, they have it in them to represent religion more worthily than any who have gone before them.

In a second form of the reaction from Protestant orthodoxy, the Reformation was given up as a wicked rebellion against the Church. But if men looked behind it, perforce they looked to Rome. There was no escape in appeals to the primitive Church, the General Councils, the undivided Church, or suchlike nebulous authorities. If they construed these by the principles of the Middle

Ages they came to the Romanism of the Middle Ages, or something hardly worth distinguishing from it; and if they went on other principles they necessarily came back to some sort of Protestantism. Thus those of the Tractarians who did not think fit to leave the English Church had no great quarrel with the doctrine of the Middle Ages, and never seemed very sure how far they had good reason for their state of separation from what they venerated as the chief part of the authoritative Church. At the other end of the scale stand men like Gottfried Arnold, who wrote his history on the theory that the official action of the Church was always wrong. There can be no doubt of his Protestantism, though his orthodoxy, and still more his impartiality, may be open to question.

The standing cause of the catholicizing reaction is the natural man's impatience of responsibility for the use of reason in religion. In Rudolf Sohm's words, The natural man is a born Catholic. To this may be added dislike of particular Protestant doctrines, annoyance at the divisions of Protestants, resentment of the higher, more exacting, and often irksome and finicking Protestant standard of morality, unspiritual desire of certainty, and æsthetic admiration of Romish worship and institutions. The question of truth does not seem very much considered by "perverts." But, like the devotional reaction, it changed its character in course of time. There was a Romeward drift of some importance in northern Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century, in all ranks from Christina of Sweden and Augustus of Saxony downward. In England it was only a passing fashion

of the time of James II. In France came first a time of pressure with mixed results. Turenne conformed, but Schomberg laid down his marshal's baton. Then came the persecution, first of Protestants, and afterwards of Jansenists, which destroyed the best life of France, and left a baser nation for the Revolution.

We find no very serious Romeward drift again till we come to the Romanticism which followed the Napoleonic wars. The eighteenth century was not a time when many thought it worth while to change their religion. Romanticism has a character of its own. On one side, it links on the naturalism of Rousseau to the æsthetic movement of the nineteenth century; on another, it appeals from the lawless violence of the Revolution to some fabled past age of order and piety. Thus it rather idealized the Middle Ages than adopted their principles, and its interest was quite as much political as religious. The Pope came in for his share of admiration along with legitimacy, chivalry, the crusades, and the rest. He was viewed rather as the bulwark of society and the guardian of moral order than as the earthly centre of the revelation. So Romanticism belonged essentially to the Legitimist reaction, and passed away with it. It was too liberal for the rising ultramontanism within the Roman Church; not liberal enough for the Protestantism outside it.

Even the Tractarian movement in the English Church was not without its political aspect. It originated in fear of what a reformed Parliament might do to the Church, in fierce hatred of all the movements of human thought which Newman classed as Liberalism. For Liberalism appealed to reason; and the claim of reason

to judge of religion was the abomination of the Tractarians. They took the intensely sceptical view that it is an essentially irreligious faculty, and the mother of every heresy. Their own appeal was not directly to the Middle Ages, but to the Fathers. The difference, however, was trifling, for by the Fathers they practically meant the Latin Fathers from Cyprian downward. They took little notice of the Greeks, ignored the sub-apostolic age, allowed nothing for historical development, and almost overlooked the enormous difference between the Alexandrians and the Latins —which is as great a mistake as it would be to confound the Puritans with the Jesuits. The Fathers were the Fathers, from Cyprian to Bernard, and were all made to speak with one voice. They lumped them all together, construed them everywhere on the principles of the Middle Ages, and, as Pius IX is reported to have said, came to Popery without the Pope. In substance this was true; and the exception they looked on rather as an unfortunate accident of history than a difference of principle.

The Tractarians gained a decisive tactical advantage over the Evangelicals of their time, by posing as the stricter party just when the standard of duty was rapidly rising in all departments of official life; and their policy of treating every expression of adverse opinion as grossly impious enabled them to overawe much opposition. They had also some telling arguments for hasty thinkers. If I believe in the Catholic Church, must I not believe what it tells me? If I give thanks that this child is regenerate, must I not believe that it

is regenerate? If there be rubrics which command fasts or daily services, am I not bound to obey them? If the Catholic Church (commonly meaning Rome) says or does this or that, must I not do my best to bring the half-schismatic English Church into line with it? Must I not obey the priest blindly, as I obey the doctor? All this is pure sophistry; but it is still effective. But the greatest attraction of all to the natural man was that it enabled him to work out his own salvation on much easier terms than Evangelicalism. Obedience to law is always easier than a change of character. The Church regenerated him in infancy, and provided him with such continuous help in later life that none but a ribald could go far wrong. The Tractarian was not without searchings of heart; but they were more over particular points of positive law than on his general relation to God,—for *that* the Church guaranteed once for all. As a moral system, Tractarianism is much below the Evangelical plane.

Yet the Tractarians also had some real advantages over the Evangelicals. They took a freer view of life in general, and of Sunday in particular. So long as a man observed the ordinances of the Church, they meddled much less with his private life. With this freedom they combined a spirit of decency and order in public worship which contrasted well with the noisy revivalism of some of their opponents, and fell in with the growing tendency to look on the eighteenth century as an age of scandals.[1]

[1] There was force in the argument, though it was used for more than it was worth. The Evangelicals were by no means generally negligent of clerical duty. It is neither the general law of the land nor the specific promise of ordination that all things commanded in the Liturgy (*e.g.* Daily

They also made the idea of the Church more real, though they looked on it more as a positive ordinance than as answering to a need of human nature. The romance of its past might stir enthusiasm, but it was not yet made a bond for society.[1]

In general the Tractarians were narrower than the Evangelicals, and their narrowness was more a matter of principle. There was little gain of width in their advances to the Romanists, and much was lost by their fierce intolerance of Nonconformists and continental Protestants. They were as introspective as the Evangelicals, preached hell-fire just as crudely, and were no way behind them in suspicion of science. If they assigned a lower position to Scripture, they abated nothing of their insistence on verbal inspiration, and on the traditional date and authorship of the several books. But what in the Evangelicals was no more than a fear —a panic if you will—which evidence in course of time may overcome, the Tractarians hardened into a principle, and consecrated with the full authority of the Church. The Evangelicals had done their duty to the State, though they never connected it very successfully with the rest of their teaching; but the Tractarians began

Service) shall be done; but that public ministrations and administration of the sacraments shall be in the form therein prescribed, and not otherwise.

[1] The Tractarians must not be allowed to take all the credit of the greater decency and order which began to prevail in public worship. It was due chiefly to the great and *general* rise in the standard of official duty which followed the first Reform Act. Indeed, the Tractarians greatly hindered its spread beyond themselves by the want of tact with which they made every change a party move, and by the want of charity with which they forced changes on unwilling congregations.

with deep distrust of a State which had meddled with Church reform; and distrust passed into hostility when the successive blows of the Jerusalem bishopric, the Hampden appointment, and the Gorham Judgment convinced them of its complete profaneness. They had nothing to hope from a State which had refused to let them drive out the Evangelicals, or even to enforce Daily Service. Meanwhile they were obliged to treat the Articles they had subscribed as "hostile documents," and expend a vast amount of "reserve" and special pleading (their enemies used worse names) in vain endeavours to force them into accordance with "Church principles." They were in a false position as officials of the English Church. The movement was conceived in scepticism and born in sophistry; and it has contributed scarcely anything to the advance of Christian thought.

As the more or less ritualistic Anglicanism now prevalent in the English Church seems to be something more than a simple offshoot of Tractarianism, we shall do best by leaving it till we have considered some other forms of thought.

We come now to two classes of movements which are broadly separated from the first two by their acceptance of reason as the guide in matters of religion. They do not begin with philosophical scepticism, though some of them soon come down to it. They would all agree in theory that religion is to be accepted so far and only so far as it can justify itself to reason, but they would give the most various answers to the question how far it can so justify itself. Some take more and some less of what

is commonly called religion, and some none at all, so that the results they reach cover the whole distance which separates a militant atheism from a Christianity which is not afraid of reason. They are further theoretically agreed in the conception of revelation as a personal God's declaration of himself in accordance with reason, not contrary to reason or without relation to reason—agreed, I mean, in the sense that this is the only conception of it which can possibly be true, though some of them would add on various grounds that as a matter of fact there is not, and perhaps there cannot be, any revelation even of this kind.

Our third and fourth forms of the reaction have now to be distinguished. This is best done not by any particular results men have come to, like the acceptance or rejection of particular beliefs of Christians or others, but by the place assigned to the conception of a special or central revelation. Such conception being unlawful if not in accordance with reason, it cannot in any case be all-absorbing as it may be in the first two reactions. It must at least allow free space for everything else that is in accordance with reason. Therefore it may have either no place at all or a subordinate place, or else it may be left to find its proper place in the widest possible survey of the entire universe of persons and things. If its place is subordinate, it will not only be generally in accordance with reason, but its character will be determined and limited in advance by the particular method of some particular department of knowledge; while, if it is left free, such particular methods may be of the utmost value for verifying details and bringing them

into wider relations, but they will not be allowed to determine the general conception in advance.

For our third form, then, of reaction we have before us a vast number of movements of all sorts, which agree only in assigning a subordinate place or no place at all to a special or central revelation. First came the Deists, who subordinated it to what was called natural religion, because it was supposed to contain all that can be discovered by reason only. Thus Matthew Tindal and some of the Germans of the *Aufklärung* held that revelation cannot contain anything not already found in natural religion, and that any further information which it may seem to contain does not properly belong to it, but is useless or meaningless, and in any case has no authority. A doctrine need not be proved contrary to reason, but may be rejected if it cannot be discovered by reason. In Germany and England they did not generally care to set the dominant religion altogether at defiance, though they went further in France, where the Church commanded no respect; but there was still a great variety among them. Some of them outraged every canon of criticism and common sense in the forlorn endeavour to shew that the stories of the New Testament were never meant to be miraculous at all, while others rejected them just because they were so meant. But there was a weak point here in Protestantism. The old Latin idea still prevailed, that divine action is known to be divine by a breach of natural order, and many were content to argue that we can see good reasons for a breach. Some of the Apologists rose higher—Butler is clear enough; but if the Deists went wrong, they had plenty of company.

Schemes of this kind were soon seen to be complete failures. If they did not reject Christianity, they made it superfluous, and therefore incredible; while, if they did, they could not explain it by fraud and priestcraft. Nevertheless, they contributed useful material for a higher conception of revelation. It was something to have the general revelation implied in the existence of reason brought to the front. It was well, too, that the unity of truth should be proclaimed against the old dualism—that a revelation which is true cannot be contrary to reason, and we must be able to see that it is not. It was good, too, that the difficulties of treating the Bible as an infallible book of oracles should be thrown down before the world, to the permanent unsettlement of a sleepy orthodoxy which is an equal scandal to religion and to reason. Yet again, it was good to have the whole field of religion searched out by a criticism which made it for ever impossible that reasoning men should enforce dogmas without distinction of secondary from vital matters.

The earlier Unitarians, from Belsham and Priestley to Channing, went on much the same general principles as the Deists, though they did not reject so much of the Christianity of the time. They need no further mention.

LECTURE XXIII.

MODERN THOUGHT.

II.

I SHOULD be sorry to venture on anything in the least like a general survey of the great age of philosophy in Germany, from Kant to Hegel. I can make no pretension to either the training or the learning needed for such a task; nor does it seem required for our purpose. All that can in any case be done within our limits will be to get some idea of the forces which for the last two hundred years have been shaping a higher conception of the knowledge of God; and even this we can only do by keeping strictly to the broader lines of the development we have to trace.

German thought is strangely different from English, considering the affinity of the two nations, and perhaps we shall never quite understand each other. But the first thing that strikes me—it may be the bias of my own studies—is that from Lessing to Harnack they have seldom taken fair account of history in its relation to religion. The more part subordinate it to metaphysics; and even the Ritschlians who try to keep the metaphysics out of religion fall under its influence when they limit

their view of Christ to the impression of his teaching, and treat the historical development of its meaning as mere corruption and degeneracy. Few maxims have done more widespread mischief than the saying that Philosophy ignores history. True as it is in the sense that philosophy deals only with universal and eternal fact, it is full of danger when taken to mean that a student of such truth can safely neglect its history among men. Those who apply it to a religion which appeals to alleged historical facts are not discussing the claim, but summarily putting it out of court. Some of them lay down broadly the principle that no facts of time can prove eternal truth. Others seem to think them too uncertain to prove anything at all. Another class, like the old Gnostics, find that such facts have no serious meaning except as texts for parables of our own devising. Others hold that while the belief in such facts is a force to be reckoned with, the truth or falsehood of the facts is not worth discussing. Yet others who do not formally dispute the value of such facts read them in such subordination to their own philosophical assumptions that they feel entitled to force any evidence whatever into accordance with them. Methods like these invite criticism; but it may be enough to say that this refusal to decide historical questions by historical evidence is the same mistake as that of deciding scientific questions by the dogmas of a Church.

If a higher conception of religion is to be built up, deeper foundations will have to be laid; and this was the work of the Germans, as it had been that of Socrates. They had a good deal of rubbish to clear away. Though

rationalism is by no means the best thought of Germany, its permanence compels us to set it down as a native growth. With all his differences, Harnack often reminds us of Semler. In the eighteenth century it was at its shallowest. It limited Christianity to the Sermon on the Mount, cared little for the historical facts, counted the Greek theology a corruption, criticized the Bible in a very modern style, and altogether finely illustrated the intellectual presumption of the time.

But there were voices crying in the wilderness. It was not fitting that the great age should come unheralded. Far away in the north, Hamann's prophetic insight had glimpses of the great reconciling thoughts of a future still beyond us. That *omnia divina et humana omnia* is not exhausted yet. Hamann was also one of those who gave history its due, and could see the eternal revealed in the events of time. Lessing took a backward step when he rejected history as a source for the knowledge of God; yet he also gave to the world the fruitful thought that history is the divine education of the human race, though he somehow missed the inference that the method of education ought to shew something of the Teacher's character. And if he seemed (perhaps he did not mean) to teach that one religion is as good as another, even this helped to pull down Christianity from the pedestal on which men had perversely set it, as the one true revelation in a God-forsaken world of false religions.

Like an echo of the voice on Sinai came the word of the Lord by Immanuel Kant to that sordid age of partition treaties, of land-grabbing, commercial selfishness, and utilitarian religion. No thinker of modern times had

set forth with such majestic emphasis the all-sovereign claim of Duty, that

> Stern daughter of the voice of God,

who listens to no pleadings of our mortal weakness. "Thou oughtest, therefore thou canst." Properly, the idea of duty implies a personal God, for though Pantheists and Utilitarians may live by it, only Theists can give a reason for it. But when Kant had overthrown the popular philosophy which knew too much of God, he took up the Neoplatonic position that we know nothing about God as he is. He shewed that the proofs of the existence of God were untenable in their current rationalistic form; but then, instead of re-examining the ground, he abandoned it entirely. He could not overcome the old sophisms about the infinite. Therefore God is above all thought, in the sense not only that our highest conceptions fall short of the truth, but that we never can know whether they stand in any relation to the truth. This conception of God allows no room for a revelation in the world of sense, or in the reason which reasons on facts of that world. Nothing remains but conscience; and that can reveal nothing but God its author, freedom its necessary condition, and immortality its necessary consequence. But the man who preaches conscience has to take a serious view of sin. So Kant had a thoroughly Christian doctrine of a Fall, and explained it in the Christian way as the victory of selfishness over the true nature of man. So far he is entirely Augustinian, even to the point that true human nature has a bias to good as definite as the bias of fallen human nature to evil; yet his

doctrine of restoration is clearly Pelagian. Man must have a high ideal, must learn it from Christ, and must work it out by losing himself in the fellowship of the ideal Church. This last point shews an almost pantheistic disregard of the individual; but the point to notice is the second, for it does not mean what a Christian would mean by it. Christ is indeed eternal and divine, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, suffered, and rose again, and founded the Church in which he still lives. But this Christ is the moral ideal: the Christ of history is only a suggestion of it. We need not trouble about the facts of his life, or how far he realized the ideal. If he suggests it to us, that is enough; and now we can do without him. History is nothing; the moral ideal remains.

Kant is less consistent here than the rationalists. Were sin no more than they took it for, Christ might possibly have overcome it by the reasonable force of his example; but surely a deeper view of sin called for a more serious theory of restoration. Yet Kant struck the keynote here for many who came after him. So flimsy a doctrine of restoration is a weak point with him; but it is quite in order with men who returned to a view of sin as shallow as the rationalistic. It was natural that they should evaporate history in symbolism, and that those who gave up Kant's doctrine of the divinity of conscience should retain his teaching that there can be no other revelation, and conclude that there can be no revelation at all. Kant had set a stumbling-block in the way of his successors by his return to the Neoplatonic doctrine of the impossibility of knowing what God

is in himself. Jacobi broke down before it, Fichte pushed it into the universal scepticism of The Ego is one and all, the secret of Hegel is disputed still, and all that even Schleiermacher could do was to neutralize the difficulty without overcoming it.

Even more than Lessing and Hamann, Hegel is a riddle to the Germans themselves. Is he a sound Lutheran, or not even a Christian? Is he upon the whole an orthodox person who thinks in terms of philosophy, or does he use Christian language only to conceal his unbelief? His own disciples fought over the question, and the philosophers are still divided, every man trying to claim Hegel for his own side. It would ill become a mere outsider to decide a question on which Hutchison Stirling and M'Taggart are at issue; but he may safely say that the logical meaning of a system and its author's meaning are not necessarily the same. Hegel always declared himself a Lutheran, and certainly looked on his own work as a defence of religion and not an attack upon it. In this he may have been mistaken; but we can hardly doubt that such was his belief, and that such was in the main the first impression made by his writings.

Fortunately, we can leave this *crux philosophorum* to the learned. Hegel's Trinity dimly reminds us of the Scandinavian mythology. We seem to recognize the deep thought of the old Teutonic heathenism, that peace in the divine was broken up by Balder's death, and has to be regained through suffering and loss before it can be restored in a higher and eternal harmony. But it is lifted now to the plane of monotheism and expressed in

the language of philosophy, and the war in heaven is not fought out in the Twilight of the Gods,

> On Vigrid's hundred leagues of plain,

but in the Person of Christ. There may be more of atavism in this than at first appears. However, here we have first the doctrine that man is the image of God and God the archetype of man, for on no other ground can we possibly argue from the trinity in human consciousness to a Trinity of any sort (no matter about its orthodoxy) in the divine. If so, the Trinity must be eternal. The divine soul must have a body, and that an eternal one, and this is what we call the Son. But that which is perfect in the eternal state appears fragmentary in time. Nature was the first manifestation in time of eternal Spirit; and because it was such a manifestation, it held a germ of life which could not but grow till it came to full consciousness in man. This brought on the struggle we call sin between the higher life and the natural or selfish life which was blameless in the lower animals; and the struggle calls forth a cry for deliverance. Now comes the God-man to break the chain of selfishness by a life of perfect unselfishness completed and most fully manifested on the cross. The life which had been separated from God is now restored in a higher form, and the God-man enters on a new life in the Church.

This is confessedly a Christian reading of the scheme, and may be quite mistaken as a statement of its logical meaning. But we are entitled to read it this way, because our question is not so much of its ultimate

meaning, or even of what Hegel himself meant by it, as of the first impression it made on the world: and this is matter of history. Hegel was a professed Christian who presented it as something Christian, and was generally hailed as an advocate of Christianity, so that its first influence was in a general way decidedly Christian. It might not be very orthodox, but it certainly seemed Christian till another side of it was brought forward by Strauss; and perhaps the later predominance of the Left among his followers is as much due to the general growth of unchristian thought as to the unchristian elements of the system.

Our sketch is of the very slightest, and many of the questions here passed over are fundamental; but it may give some idea of Hegel's universal method or law of evolution. First one element, then its contradictory, then the reconciling third which completes the truth. First the body, then the soul, then the reconciling spirit. On this law he explains the life of God (though there the whole Trinity had to be eternal), the life of man, the history of religion in general, and the history of the Church in particular. Baur was only following the Master's lead when he pointed first to the Jewish party in the early Church, then to the Pauline as its contradictory, then to the Christianity of the second century as the reconciliation.

If Hegel could not reconcile philosophy and Christianity for more than a moment, at all events he gave a mighty impulse to religious thought. The idea, indeed, of evolution was not new. Something like it is implied in Lessing's view of history as education, and it would

have come to the surface long before his time but for the unscientific supernaturalism which seemed to think orderly action unworthy of a divine agent. But the knowledge of God was put in a new light when the idea of evolution was firmly lodged in future theories of history and religion. Hitherto the Christians had always looked forward to a divine catastrophe, and after that a beatific vision; but here was a revelation of eternal Spirit building up the temple of knowledge stone by stone from the thoughts of successive generations. Catholics had imagined a faith delivered perfect once for all, and Protestants had dreamed a vain dream of returning to some legendary golden age of apostolic purity. They looked backward to a finished revelation, and forward to some sudden rending of the vail; but they could not see the growing light around them. It was the spirit of asceticism, not the spirit of Christ, which told them that the light of another world is to be looked for only in another world, and made them blind to the revelation of God in history. The great thought of Hegel was the offspring of the Reformation.

The change which the idea of evolution made in the conception of revelation was enormous. In the first place, history began to shew something more than a sovereign Will setting up nations and pulling them down, and dealing out inscrutable judgments on pride and wickedness. The visions of a plan in history which had floated before Prudentius and Augustine had been dissipated by the fall of the Empire; but now the idea could be taken up and connected, not only with Christianity, but with philosophy and with religion generally. Not

only the Empire, but the huge set-back of the Middle Ages could now be understood as parts of one still greater evolution.

More than this. It had always been understood that divine action on the soul of the individual is largely through the common forces of nature, and even that the dispensations of Providence may take the form of natural calamities. There is nothing miraculous in the four sore judgments of the sword and the famine and the noisome beast and the pestilence.[1] It was understood that the work of judgment might be done through natural forces; not so the work of revelation. There the right hand of power must be put forth from heaven: a consuming fire must go before him, and a mighty tempest must be stirred up round about him. And the word which comes by miracle must be perfect. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. Other such words may come later, but every word of God must be perfect, both in substance and in form.

This was the theory of revelation which the Latin Church had handed down from still older times. It survived the Middle Ages, and even the Reformation scarcely shook it; but the questionings of the eighteenth century began to make it a burden on religion, and now the idea of evolution shattered it at a blow. In the hands of the philosophers the method of evolution was no more than the unfolding of a logical sequence; but even this was enough to shew that revelation could no longer be thought of as a number of oracles thrown down from heaven. The word of the Lord might or might not

[1] Ezek. xiv 21.

come through natural forces; but each successive word must take up the work of the past, and be a step in the plan. And this meant, further, that a message which is divine will not be delivered as abstract truth, but adapted to the capacities and the needs of the men receiving it. Just because it is divine, it must contain a human element. The substance must still be eternal truth, but its form must bear the mark of its time. Whether or in what sense miracle might have a place in the process was still uncertain; but in any case the idea that no revelation could come except through miracle was for ever overthrown.

Perhaps Hegel had done more than any man since Luther to clear up the whole idea of revelation; nevertheless, his position was thoroughly unscientific and uncritical. The idea of evolution is one thing, its actual method or law in a given subject is another. When Darwin and Wallace brought the idea into science, they studied science to find out the actual method of evolution in biology, and took infinite pains in finding out the facts, and in fitting their theory to the facts they found. But when Hegel brought it into history, he did not become a student of history to discover its actual method in history, but simply carried over his philosophical method of logical sequence, and took for granted that this must be the method of evolution in history also, leaving to others the labour of verification. Hegel himself, with all his genius for seeing the broad meaning of events, had no such faith in history as he would have needed to carry him through the minute work of historical criticism. Indeed, the marvellous suggestiveness of his works is

proof enough that his wrong method was not entirely misleading, or rather perhaps that a man of genius can strike a light anywhere. The fact remains, that he made a fundamental mistake in offering a purely philosophical solution of a purely historical problem. He never attempted to deal seriously with the urgent question of the relation of the God-man of his philosophy to the Christ of history. Minor difficulties might be allowed to pass; but here at any rate he was bound to shew how he passed from logic to facts, and even here he failed to do it. This was the weak point of the system; and the moment Strauss took up the question seriously he threw the whole school into confusion. Yet surely a philosophy of history which gives no satisfactory account of the historical Christ is self-condemned. It fails at the decisive point.

This fundamental error of applying the method of one study to another is common enough in history. In the Middle Ages (and often in later times) they explained the lower by the higher, studying history and science by the current methods of theology; but in the last century the tendency has been rather the other way, by making the logical or the scientific method the full measure of religion. Newman is a particularly bad case. He not only mistook a logical development for history, but placed the whole process under the unchanging supervision of the very Church whose changes the whole theory was invented to explain. With him we must class all those who endeavour to solve the problems of religion by the methods of a materialistic or practically materialistic science. They are all involved in the

common error of limiting the higher by the lower—whether it be history by logic, or spirit by matter.

After all, then, Hegel only half did his work. The idea of evolution was lodged in that of revelation, but its method in history remained for his successors to determine.

Schleiermacher may count among the philosophers, but with him religion came first and philosophy second. As a religious influence he is the greatest name in Germany since Luther: as a philosopher he ranks lower, though from our special point of view he is hardly behind even Hegel. He is no clear thinker with a clear system, but an eclectic who is more anxious to adopt the good points of other systems than to make his own consistent; and the result is a patchwork of inconsistencies. Schleiermacher went by feeling, as the Pietists had done; and therefore with a difference. The men who go by feeling commonly reflect as much as others the intellect of their own time, or rather of the last generation. The Pietists found the religion of the time distrusting reason: Schleiermacher lived in an age when philosophy had destroyed rationalism without dethroning reason; and by philosophy his whole system is deeply coloured.

That system, however, is rather a religion in philosophical form than a philosophy in religious form like Hegel's. The chief aim of Schleiermacher is to vindicate the place of feeling in a religion of reason, and to gather everything round the Person of Christ and a real redemption through him. He begins like Kant with a Neoplatonic conception of God as inscrutable, absolutely

simple, and above personality. Power is his one attribute, which, however, human weakness breaks up into holiness, wisdom, and the rest, according to the point of view from which we look at it. But surely this is to mistake the outcome for the character, and to resolve the character itself into an illusion of our finite nature.

His doctrine of the Fall is nearly that of Kant; but his theory of restoration is much the reverse of Pelagian. Man is helpless, for the race is one, so that the sin of one debases the rest. But high over all rules the eternal counsel. Even as life was given in some past age by one creative act, so must it now be renewed by another. But this second creative act is more than an afterthought to get rid of sin. The two miracles were foreseen, and therefore quite natural from the divine side, however miraculous they may seem to us.

Here, then, is his great contribution to the idea of revelation. As Hegel had shewn that the successive steps of revelation must form a connected series, so Schleiermacher shewed that, as Butler hinted long before, the things of faith seem supernatural only because we view them from the standpoint of sinners, whereas from a higher position we should see that they have a perfectly natural place in the higher order of the eternal counsel,—in reality, the supernatural is the natural.

Yet Schleiermacher's ideas on the central question are far from clear. According to him, Christ was a man perfectly filled with God, and at any rate in that sense divine; for he, not Adam, is the image of God. But in becoming *a* man he became *the* man; for the race is one,

and gave us of his life by the simple fact of being one of us. This meant that he must suffer for us; for if the race is one, the suffering of the members must reach the Head. The Resurrection is true, but its historic truth matters little. He ascended into heaven only to be again incarnate in his Church, for the Holy Spirit is only the life of Christ in his followers. The proof of his presence is the spirit of religion; and the spirit of religion is the spirit of absolute dependence on God. When we have lost our individual life in this, we shall become partakers in the universal life in the Church.

This may not be very successful as a system; but it is throughout suggestive. The chief points of it for the future conception of revelation would seem to be the high (too high) place assigned to feeling, the emphasis laid on the image of God, and the pervading thought of the unity of the race. If none of these points were new, they all needed to be asserted afresh. That of the unity of the race is Calvinistic; but it is not conceived in the Calvinistic way, for it is the unity rather of a common life than of actual descent. It points to what may after all be the true conception of life, not as a number of individual fragments, but as a unity now veiled, which when unveiled will bring no pantheistic absorption, but be as consistent with the fullest development of the individual as it is now.

The weak points of the system are evident; but we can come now to the influence of science.

There is no feature of the last half century more characteristic than the way in which all departments of knowledge are becoming an organic unity. Our fathers

had a number of separate studies; we find that there is no study which does not constantly work into many others. Thus Greek and Hebrew cannot be isolated from other languages; the astronomer calls in spectroscope and camera to help his telescope; the historian cannot do his work without archæology and economics, geography and philosophy. Even the practical man who distrusts theory cannot help seeing how much the political movements depend on the economic, and the economic on the moral.

In this modern alliance of science, philosophy, and criticism, it is very commonly supposed that science has taken the lead, and recast philosophy and criticism in its own moulds; but it would be nearer the truth to say that philosophy is more than ever shaping science and criticism. We are all philosophers, whether we know it or not, and if we do not know it, our philosophy is all the more likely to be scraps of bad philosophy picked up at random. The ideas which determine our ways of thinking are of necessity philosophical, not scientific. For example, materialistic and determinist conceptions are matters for philosophy, not for science, to decide upon, and all scientific predictions depend on a philosophical assumption. The incredibility of so-called miracles is not a fact lately proved by science, but an old assumption of the philosophers, which may owe something of its present currency to the confused thinkers who seem to fancy that scientific experience differs from all other in being able to prove a negative. Even the idea of evolution, as we have seen, is no peculiarity of modern science. What else is Augustine's

argument *de civitate Dei?* What does the Bible profess to tell of but an evolution on the grandest scale, reaching forward from the far past when there was no life yet to a far future where there shall be no more death? What Darwin and Wallace did was not to invent the idea, but to transfer it from philosophy to biology, to investigate its method in biology, and to shew how many phenomena the theory enabled them to describe.

Science in ancient times was subject, as we have seen, to many hindrances. Religion was polytheistic, gave no idea of unity in Nature, and was as liable to panics as in the Middle Ages. Fear of the people was sometimes a real check on science; it might not have been very safe to propound a Copernican astronomy at Athens. Philosophy worked too much by deductive methods, turned away too much from concrete facts, and sometimes did great mischief with hasty decisions. Thus the axiom that all infinites are equal, barred the advance of mathematics as effectually as the simplicity of the divine stopped the progress of theology. As for the rhetoric which became dominant in later times, it was neither science nor philosophy, but a low sort of literature. Yet again, in the worship of beauty things not beautiful were despised, or at any rate overlooked; and this was another limitation, for discoveries commonly arise from the closer study of neglected facts.

If science is consistent with religion at all, we may fairly ask whether Christianity is not the only religion which could become quite supreme without limiting the field of science. Some of its particular difficulties are of course real; but a much larger number are only the

blunders of a stupid literalism which mistakes itself for honesty. Just as the true affinity of Christianity to the Empire was masked so long by republican survivals in the State, so its true affinity to science was obscured much longer by heathen survivals in the Church. The Greeks were indisposed to science, first by philosophy, then by rhetoric; the Latins rested all truth on authority and law; the Reformers were absorbed in the struggle for existence. For sixteen hundred years, in short, men were thinking of almost anything rather than the accurate and patient observation of scientific facts.

Yet it is plain matter of history that modern science is the nursling of Christianity. This means more than that the early men of science were mostly Christians, for most men were Christians in the seventeenth century. It does not mean only that they were generally Christians of more than average earnestness, though this also is true. Kepler, Pascal, Boyle, Newton were a credit to religion as well as to science. It means that the principle of science—the unity of Nature—was taken over from the Christian doctrine of the unity of God; the purpose of science—the betterment of man's estate—from the Christian doctrine of the dignity of man; and the method of science—the investigation of facts instead of the invention of theories—from the methods of study called for by the historical facts alleged by the Christians. If these conceptions were not quite unknown in ancient times, they were very much more firmly held in the seventeenth century; and the change can hardly be accounted for without the influence of Christianity.

Even the separation between science and religion in the eighteenth century was by no means mere estrangement. The change from Newton to Laplace is not simply from religion to irreligion—and indeed Laplace never shewed himself actively irreligious in the same sense as Diderot or von Holbach. It rather means a reasonable division of labour. Men were coming to see that science as dealing with phenomena and sequences is best kept apart from the questions of cause and origin, which belong to philosophy and religion. Things are not very different now. Our men of science may be actively religious or actively irreligious; but the greater part even of the irreligious are more anxious to keep religion from intruding on science than to attack it on its own ground. Nor can such anxiety be deemed unreasonable, as long as the ideas of religion current in Europe are so largely those of the Middle Ages.

The relations of modern science and religion have been upon the whole more friendly than is often supposed. Religion has not always entered a *non possumus* of anti-scientific dogmatism, and science has not always borrowed from philosophy an anti-religious dogmatism. No doubt the Christians, or a good number of them, have had some unworthy panics at the great advances of science marked by the Newtonian astronomy, the rise of geology, and the adoption of evolution; but they soon got over their fears—at least, the more sensible of them did—and even learned to welcome the new-comers as their best allies. It must be said, too, that the later panics have been less formidable than the earlier. I have not heard that the Church is in danger from the discovery of

radium. And after all, men who are not specialists may be excused something if they are not so quick as they might be to see the merits of the last new scientific theory. Religion gives just offence when questions of science are decided by authority; and science is without excuse when it allows religion to be condemned by philosophy masquerading in the dress of science.

"The heaven for height, and the earth for depth";[1] for the revelation of science is more unsearchable than the counsel of kings. Because science is truly a revelation, it has beaten the dwarfed and distorted religions of authority from position to position like a routed army. It has forced us to drop our puny theories, and face the glory of truth. Instead of the round world which cannot be moved, every star that twinkles in the sky becomes a fiery sun whirling through the deeps of space. Instead of the six days of creation, we look down vistas of time to which a thousand years are no more than a watch in the night. Instead of repeated acts of creation, we see a mighty chain of life stretching upward from the sea-weeds and the sponges to—Where shall we fix a limit for all-enduring patience and all-sovereign goodness? The Christians put there an incarnate Lord of all, in whom both heaven and earth consist and have their being: and even those who are least disposed to follow them must allow that this is no unworthy climax for the ripened work of all but everlasting ages.

In three specific directions modern science has cleared our ideas of religion, by shewing that certain conceptions of it are finally untenable—except, of course, for the

[1] Prov. xxv 3.

fundamental scepticism which overthrows religion and science together by denying the unity of truth. Religions have spoken variously on the unity of the Power behind the world, on the method of its working, and on its essential character; and now science brings fresh and independent evidence which seems to give a final decision of the first question, and to limit the others by shewing that some of the answers commonly given to them will have to be discarded.

First, then, the witness of science would seem clear and decisive, that the universe has one plan, one Power behind it, and no more. It is at any rate a coat without seam, which we cannot rend in sunder. Physical evil is too closely woven into the fabric to be torn out and assigned to some alien power, so that all polytheistic or dualistic explanations of it must be dropped. And if that Power is personal, we must conclude that even moral evil is here by his permission, not by compulsion from some second ultimate Power. Its possibility must be, so to speak, a part of the plan, so that even if some Satan or Ahriman were concerned in it, his action would have to be in the same sense independent as our own, and in no other.

In the next place, science has finally destroyed the conception of a God who acts on the world only from the outside, which is still so common in the West that both friends and enemies often mistake it for the direct teaching of religion. Of course the negative, that he has never so acted, is more than science can prove without help from the intruding philosophy; but no case of such action is recorded in scientific experience.

But once again let us make sure that there is no question here of space or place. Were it true that God pervades the universe like the ether, the fact would belong to science, not to religion. His omnipresence as a doctrine of religion simply means that his action is not hindered by distance like ours, but is as direct in any one place as in any other; and his immanence means, further, that the common works of Nature are as truly divine acts as anything we can imagine done by a miracle. Here, then, science comes in with a dilemma. Either natural law is all divine, or none of it is divine. Either God works in all, or he works in none. And surely it is an immense gain to have the question brought to so clear an issue, and every sort and kind of half-and-half theory struck out of the reckoning.

For a third question, there are some who say that God is unfeeling Law, while the Christians tell us that God is Love; and here again I think science has decided something. At first sight the witness of science is all for rigid law, and there are many who look no further; yet the right conclusion is not that love is not behind, but that if there be love, it must be perfect love. We cannot believe now in a love divine which wavers and changes, and has moods and tempers. Clear the word of all that weakens and debases the loving self-surrender of the noblest of mortals, and you will see more and more clearly that the awful sternness of Nature is no greater—and may well be no other—than the sternness of perfect love in doing its work of love. If Nature wavered, this would prove that God is at any rate not perfect love.

I cannot venture here on the wide field of thought which opens out before us. One thing, however, is clear. Science has utterly wiped out the distinction which Aquinas drew between a kingdom of nature and a kingdom of grace governed by different laws. We know now that Nature covers all, so that God is not more in the "breaks" of evolution than in the earthquake and the strong wind and the fire on Horeb. There is no room for God unless Nature itself in all its parts and all its details is the expression of a divine purpose limited by neither space nor time. Sin itself must be such expression to this extent, that even the sinner who sinks below the beast has still the potency of better things. What if God "endures him with much long-suffering?"[1] Now this means that natural law is itself the method of his government. It has thrown a new light on the old saying, Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap, and shewn that the things of the future are none the less divine if they are natural consequences of the past, instead of the arbitrary rewards and punishments which seem the limit of some theologies.

The word of science to religion seems everywhere the same. The highest ideals may be true, but the lower must be false. So science has been a destroying spirit, and has filled the temple of truth with ruins. But the things she has destroyed were only idols. Religion—the highest ideal—she has placed on a firmer throne than ever.

[1] Rom. ix 22, *ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ*—the patience which holds its course unwavering through the provocations of human wilfulness.

LECTURE XXIV.

MODERN THOUGHT.

III.

NOBODY doubts now that philosophy must influence our conception of religion, and few dispute the claim of science to some voice in the matter; but as regards criticism, opinions are more divided. Criticism moves entirely in the plane of history. It settles the precise text and meaning of documents, their date and authorship, and the sequence and character of historical events: and what have such sublunary things to do with religion? The traditionalist has got his dogma; and if history does not agree with him, so much the worse for history. It must be made to agree, or simply set aside as uncertain. The philosopher or the æsthetic person may say, Christ stands only for the moral or the æsthetic ideal; and if the ideal satisfies me, the facts which suggested it may as well be false as true. The man of science may remind us that Nature is permanent, while man passes away; and surely the final truth, whatever it be, must be sought in things that cannot pass away. The mystic or the pietist may say, I know that Christ liveth in me: what more can I want to know? and the man in the

street may add in his common-sense way, that if there is any good at all in religion, it cannot need to be hunted out from the dust of the past. Thus we find many who would separate history from religion, because they believe in religion but not in history; and others would agree to the separation because they believe in history but not in religion.

Against it, however, there is the consideration that the religion with which civilized peoples chiefly have to do is one that alleges historical facts and challenges historical investigation; and the challenge cannot be refused, for the central figure of the religion is also the central figure of history. Even if the facts turned out false or proved nothing, we could form no scholarly opinion of the religion, or of history generally, without a critical study of them.

This was fully understood by early Christian writers. It is a mistake of the grossest ignorance to ridicule them as generally uncritical. On the contrary, the claim of the Gospel to be historical forced them to a much more serious study of critical methods than the heathens had occasion for. If Clement of Rome believes in the Phœnix, so does Tacitus; and while Tacitus is the greatest of the heathens, Clement is one of the least intellectual of the Christians. Irenæus has two or three bad mistakes, and hasty thinkers have made too much of them; but he knows exactly what he has to prove, and brings exactly the kind of evidence needed to prove it. Eusebius is careful to give accurate quotations, and to name his authorities for the stories he tells; and all antiquity can shew no finer piece of critical work than

the discussion of the authorship of the Apocalypse by Dionysius of Alexandria. The Latins, as usual, are much behind the Greeks; but few even of the Greeks can match with Jerome.

But critical method after the fifth century was first replaced by authority and then forgotten. Even the Greeks follow authority in the most slavish way at the Nicene Council of 787, which restored image-worship. In the West everything went down which seemed to make for edification. Piety was omnivorous; and the Church of Rome has a bad pre-eminence in devising or adopting forgeries, from the spurious canons of Nicæa to the False Decretals. But there was a good deal of criticism in the Middle Ages, though it was hampered by fear of heresy. Hincmar was not deceived by the False Decretals, and such writers as Lambert of Hersfeld or Matthew Paris are no mean historians. Criticism came to vigorous life again at the Renaissance, and when the Reformation made the historical position of the Church of Rome the central question of the time, Protestants were forced into criticism like the early Christians.

In England after the Reformation, historical work was controversial, and very much limited to the disputes and sects of the early Church and the Reformation. The Middle Ages were not commonly studied, except for the direct purpose of setting forth "the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities." Gibbon too was largely controversial; but if he took a wider view of history, he left no successors. The Tractarians produced very little that was not thoroughly uncritical even or its own time. Unhistorical theories drove them to

special pleading on every page. The best historical work of their time was almost always done by declared enemies of the school, such as Thirlwall and Grote, Arnold and Milman, Macaulay and Stanley. History in England has always been deeply coloured by politics, for our best scholars have seldom regarded it as "a science, neither more nor less." A purely objective narrative of facts may be excellent material for history; but *pace* the determinists, it is not history—or at best it is history gone back to the stage of the Ptolemaic system—unless its motive forces are found in human character. Moreover, we have widespread doubts whether the historian ought to be purely indifferent. Perhaps he will do his work none the worse for having a side of his own and a clear belief that it is upon the whole the right side, provided he tries to do full justice to the other side, and never wilfully colours facts. It may be that this is the nearest approach to perfect impartiality which the weakness of human nature will allow. If every movement stands for a principle of some sort, it will be better understood by a fair-minded opponent than by the "impartial" writer who ignores its principle. Sympathy with all may be ideal: sympathy with none is injustice to all.

In Germany the conceptions of criticism and history were differently developed. At first the histories were controversial, like those of the Magdeburg Centuriators, and in another direction Arnold and Semler. But the rising spirit of historical criticism, visible even in Semler, and well seen in Bengel, was checked by the philosophers. The Lutheran doctrine of the *com-*

municatio idiomatum, and the endless controversies which arose from it, had made the Person of Christ the central problem of theology. From theology it was now carried over to philosophy; and a philosophical interpretation of it was essayed by most of the philosophers from Kant to Hegel, including even Schleiermacher. Meanwhile the work of men like Pertz and Ranke was establishing historical criticism generally on a firm basis of the study of original documents, so that, when the *Leben Jesu* of Strauss in 1835 came down like a bomb in the Hegelian camp, all parties were prepared for the closer historical study which it made necessary. What, then, were the facts of the life of Jesus of Nazareth? Men like Neander, Ullmann, Tholuck did good work on the central question at this stage; and if Baur and the Tübingen school turned the discussion aside for a while to their Hegelian reconstruction of St. Paul, the facts they brought out only made it swing back with greater emphasis than ever to One greater than Paul as the central problem of Christianity, and therefore of history generally.

During the last forty years the whole field of history has been critically worked over with increasing vigilance and thoroughness, both in Germany and England, and in France also, now that she is working off the debasement of the Second Empire and its Ultramontanism. Year by year the subject seems to increase in range as new materials are discovered and new countries come into the reckoning, and year by year the standard of work becomes more exacting. In the region which used to be called profane we have great names like Freeman

and Gardiner, Giesebrecht and Mommsen; and more decidedly dealing with the ecclesiastical side, Lightfoot and Seeley, Hort and Westcott, Creighton and Lord Acton—to name only men whose memory is fresh in Cambridge. The Bible has been sifted through and through from end to end as never book was sifted yet. The keenest of intellects have scrutinized it, the sharpest of critics have done their utmost on it, and hundreds—nay thousands—of toiling students have searched every corner of human knowledge for help to understand it—for there is no side of life or learning which has not been found to bear upon it. And as was fitting, the hardest fight of all is round the Man of Nazareth. We still hear sharp denial that he is the Son of God, though men have almost ceased to call him "that deceiver"; but there seems to be no dispute that the whole history of religion somehow gathers round him.

It is true that this magnificent work is flecked with human weakness. Purely critical machinery may be perfect, and yet bring out false results. If we begin with a bad philosophy we shall make false assumptions; and criticism will no more set us right than logic, for the assumptions will govern the criticism. Thus, if we begin, as many do, by assuming that criticism is a pure science which has nothing to do with feeling, we shall miss all that cannot be reached without sympathy; and this is the chief part of history, for nothing but sympathy can tell us the meaning of human action. So of other assumptions. I will not ask whether the historical problem of the Person of Christ, including the history

that radiates from him as well as the history that converges on him, will ever be solved by any criticism that rests on the philosophical assumptions of open or disguised materialism; but it seems clear that, after a good deal of trial, no such criticism has hitherto been reasonably successful.

Be that as it may, the results of all this criticism are not unworthy of the enormous labour they have cost. Criticism has done as much as even science to deepen and widen our conception of the knowledge of God. Its first efforts were aimed at the mediæval theory of the Church. The False Decretals were demolished before the Reformation, and the traditional claim of Latin Christianity was refuted in the sixteenth century. After an interval, criticism turned against the Protestant theory of the Bible. In the eighteenth century it did not get much beyond pointing out the varieties of reading, discrepancies of narrative, and mistakes of fact, which are fatal to crude theories of its infallibility; but in the nineteenth century criticism became constructive. If the Bible is not an infallible authority in the same sense as the Church was supposed to be, what is it? Does it differ essentially from other sacred books? and if so, how?

We shall plainly have to question the book itself, and put it in the fullest light of nature, history, and life. Criticism must do its perfect work, and cannot do it unless all relevant facts of whatever kind are taken into account. But the broad answer to our question rests on broad facts which no serious criticism can well dispute. Some sacred books, the Koran, for example,

are held to be revelations, but the Bible does not profess to be more than the record of a revelation. Only, that revelation is confessedly a special or central revelation in the sense that it lies much nearer than any other to the main line of religious development. No matter so far if it is false or true; in either case it is an alleged revelation which the guiding Power has allowed to take a place unique in history. Beyond all others it has been a conquering and expanding force, beyond all others it has shewn power to redeem its failures and outgrow its weakness, and beyond all others it has called out that mysterious force of kindliness and purity which sways the heart and renews the life of men. With all the unsettlement and noisy doubt around us, I see no sign that its ancient might is withering in these latter days. So far as a student of history like myself can judge, it shews more signs of vigorous life now than when it fought and overcame the Empire of Augustus. For good or for evil, it is still a growing force. If its outward observances are not made so much the business of life as they were in certain past ages, its influence is far more subtle and penetrating, and controls opinions and standards of conduct with more success than in the "ages of faith," or even in the best times of Puritanism, when religious enthusiasm and sordid vice went together more easily and more commonly than they do now, and caused less scandal. The moral sense of heathenism was upon the whole true,—meaning that it seldom failed to condemn the things we see to be wrong; but it often condemned admitted wrong with such lenience as almost amounted to taking it as a matter of course.

Christianity has maintained a higher standard, except in manifestly degraded churches; and that standard, with all its shortcomings, is higher in our own time than in any past age. There is not much good in modern civilization which is not either originated by Christianity or assimilated by it. Even its enemies owe most of their best things to it. Some truth there must be in this unique phenomenon ; for if we found, after all, that the guiding Power has allowed the main development of religion in history to go on altogether mistaken lines, we might have to revise our assumption that such Power is morally trustworthy.

But whatever be the case for the Gospel on the old theory, it is not often much altered by any corrections of text or shiftings of authorship and date. To put this more precisely, we note the substance of the revelation, namely, that God has given us a final assurance of his goodness in certain alleged historical facts of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. If these facts are true, it can hardly be denied that they do constitute such an assurance ; and if so, the only valid reply is to maintain that they are false. All criticism which stops short of this leaves the truth of the revelation exactly where it was before.

For instance, no critical question about the Old Testament can of itself be vital. A late date for Genesis or Daniel shews only that the method of the revelation was on this wise and not on that; and proof that Esther or Jonah is a fictitious narrative means only that the element of parable is larger than we supposed. The truth of the revelation is not affected till further

proof is given, either that the traditional dates are an integral part of it, or that parable cannot belong to a true revelation. To put the hardest case at once, let it be supposed that Jesus of Nazareth believed Psalm cx to be by David, and that it is not so. Even this is irrelevant, unless it can be further shewn, either that such mistake was sinful, or that he deliberately taught it without caring about its truth, or else that an *argumentum ad hominem* is of itself immoral. On the other hand, it would be much to the purpose if it could be shewn that he never pretended to be divine, or never rose from the dead. The revelation stands or falls with the central facts alleged in the Gospels. This is the one point where a decisive battle can be fought: elsewhere there cannot be more than skirmishing,

Now, the story of the Temptation is certainly symbolical; and there may be (I do not think there is) a small further element of symbolism at one or two other points of the New Testament where we seem to find a plain narrative. On the other hand, I am satisfied that the margin of uncertainty in the reports of Christ's words is greatly exaggerated even in "orthodox" circles, especially in connexion with the Fourth Gospel. However, the question of less or more is not very serious except for those who feel bound on principle to insist in all cases on the literal as the only legitimate meaning. By far the largest part of the narrative is presented as literal fact; and much the larger part of this, "from the baptism of John to that same day that he was taken up from us," is given as

that which the disciples had seen with their eyes and heard with their ears. It does not come before us as a romance whose value is in its spiritual significance, but claims to be nothing less and nothing else than a serious account of things which actually came to pass. If a fair review of the whole of the evidence (not literary possibilities only) brings us to the conclusion that the broad facts alleged are false, then there is an end of the Gospel; but (except so far as it may help to prove this) criticism of details is itself only a detail which need trouble none but the believers in verbal inspiration. In itself it is insignificant.

In more ways than one the critical work of modern times has cleared for us the conception of revelation. The change—to put it in general terms—is that from the theorist who assumes the method of revelation and thence determines the facts, to the student who ascertains the facts and thence infers the method. It is the same change which science underwent some time before. Criticism has demolished alike the Catholic assumption of an infallible church and the Protestant assumption of an infallible book. Again, criticism has brought to light a unity of plan in history corresponding to the unity of plan in Nature. Even Christianity is not the isolated thing it seemed to be—a rigid dogma given once for all from heaven, and standing in no relation to the world of human thought around it. We see now that while a special or central revelation must deal with the permanent questions of religion, and answer the aspirations of all the ages, it must also touch the life of its own time on every side, and be sensitive above all

others to every change of environment. In past ages the proof of the revelation was found in its utter unlikeness to the thoughts of men; but now the conception of revelation has been so humanized, that its likeness to those thoughts is made a reason for denying that there can be anything divine in it. But there is not much to choose between the old fallacy, that what is divine cannot be human, and the new fallacy, that what is human cannot be divine.

The political movement can be traced to religion like the scientific, and has quite as deeply influenced the conception of revelation. The steady drift of centuries towards democracy is more to a form of society than to a form of government. Democracy allows of a king, provided he is constitutional; and an aristocracy, provided it has no oppressive privileges. Even the French Revolution did not strike at the monarchy till it found that Louis XVI was not to be trusted; and in our own time the kings sit much more firmly than they did a couple of generations ago. The abolition of monarchy does not seem likely to become practical politics anywhere, though we may see changes in constitutionally backward countries like Germany and Russia. But the danger which most nearly threatens us is neither a despotism of kings nor an anarchy of mob rule. It is the organized rings of capitalists: and parties in England and America seem disposed to group themselves round governments which are willing to play into the hands of the "interests," and governments which are not.

The movement we speak of began with Christianity, and for more than a thousand years Christianity alone

kept any life in it. The ancient democracies were no more than oligarchies in the midst of slaves, and their memory perished for ages. Stoicism spoke brave words about the equality of men, but the declining Empire settled down into something like a system of caste. In feudal society also a man's place was fixed by his birth, so that he could seldom rise out of it. Class-feeling was still supreme. In the midst of a world of inequality, Christianity spoke to the image of God, which is the same in all men. Its teaching was the same for rich and poor, and in its central ordinance of the Supper of the Lord it ignored all differences of rank. The senator and the slave came up alike, and were on a footing of absolute equality. But if equality was the rule in the highest sphere of all, it must be the ideal in the lower spheres. Thus all distinctions of class are put on their defence. There may be good reason for them: but it must be shewn, not taken for granted; and, after all, it must be relative to a given state of society, not grounded on any permanent needs of human nature.

It is simple matter of history that the Lord's Supper has been by far the most powerful of the influences which have tended to level class prejudices. It comes out strongly in the Early Church. If slavery was not abolished, the sting of it was drawn when the slave was fully recognized as in spiritual things his master's equal. No thought ever seems to cross Perpetua's mind that "their good companion" Felicitas is any the worse for being a slave; and in the last scene, where the matron and the slave are standing hand in hand to meet the

shock of death, the deepest prejudice of the ancient world is not simply overcome, but utterly forgotten.

This strong and subtle influence was greatly weakened when the Communion was turned into the Mass. Instead of the spiritual equality of men, it now preached their common dependence on the priest. Yet something of the old spirit lasted far into the later Middle Ages. For centuries the Church was the one democratic society, where the son of a serf might become Robert of Lincoln, and a poor scholar like Nicolas of Langley could find his way to St. Peter's chair itself. But in the later Middle Ages there was heresy abroad, and the Church was panic-stricken, and took to savage methods of repression. A fixed policy of persecution forced it to lean on kings and nobles, and to become more aristocratic as well as more reactionary. So it turned finally away from the Commons of England, and made its compact *de hœretico comburendo* with the House of Lancaster. Arundel, Beaufort, Neville are the typical bishops of the fifteenth century, though Chicheley and Waynflete still represent a lower social class. Things were much the same on the continent in the days of Albert of Brandenburg and Hermann of Wied, so that the control of the Church by the nobles which commonly followed the Reformation was not entirely the novelty it seems.

The Reformation turned back the Mass into a Communion, and so far restored the spiritual equality of Christian men; but its political influence was at first quite in the other direction. This was due partly to the general causes which made for strong government at the end of the Middle Ages, partly to the fact that the

Reformation was hardly anywhere controlled by the people. In England, Germany, and Scandinavia, its course was guided by princes; in France and Scotland, by nobles; at Geneva, by a religious dictator. Besides this, the Mass was now replaced by preaching as the central ordinance of worship, so that the importance of the change was less than it might have been. Then came the wars of religion and the age of religious exhaustion. The movement was still working—even the League sometimes found it convenient to assert the rights of a Catholic people against a heretic king—but upon the whole the aristocratic organization of society was not greatly weakened before the eighteenth century. Signs there were of coming change like the Commonwealth of England, which often worked quite in the spirit of the Reformed Parliament of 1832; but the Restoration brought back the rule of the landowners, and all over Europe the question still chiefly lay between kings and oligarchies. If the philosophic despots did everything for the people, they were careful to have everything done by the king, nothing by the people. If they swept away the class privileges and other traditional anomalies that stood in the way of a well-ordered monarchy, they had no idea of creating popular rights which might prove equally troublesome. Frederick II was the last man to play democrat in practical politics.

The first decisive blow was struck when the American colonies became a great republic—the first great republic in history—with every trace of privilege among white men rooted out. This was a vast advance on the city states of ancient times, for the scale was so much larger,

and the excluded blacks were comparatively few in the northern states. The French Revolution, however, was not the new beginning it is often taken for. Both originally in France and afterwards in Europe generally it rather cleared away the wrecks of the old age than opened a new period. The creative ideas date before and after; seldom from the Revolution itself. Its leaders borrowed their political ideas from America, their notions of religion from the English Deists, though they certainly dressed them up in Rousseau's fashions: and Rousseau was behind the times in politics and religion, though he made a real advance in æsthetics. In the next half century other countries as well as France found out that the tree of liberty cannot be transplanted full-grown. The training of England had been going on since the days of Henry Fitz-Empress; and the work of ages could not be done in a day by a paper constitution. So failure after failure marks the earlier nineteenth century. Though there was little fighting in the generation after Waterloo, there was much political instability. If the Holy Alliance partly restored the old order, it had to be maintained more and more by sheer military violence; and if the revolutionists could not overturn it, Liberalism gained strength at every change, for through all the changes ran a deepening sense of the worth and dignity of man as man, and of his right and duty to make himself the best man he can. It was a secular counterpart of the religious work of the Reformation.

This, then, was the work of the liberal movement which swept over Europe in the middle of the century—to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens,

and to let the oppressed go free. It is not finished yet, and indeed has been partly undone by the great reaction of the last thirty or forty years, to the vain glory of militarism and the futile selfishness of commercial wars. But political reform is passing into social. As new and larger problems arise, we are coming to see that we are only manufacturing crime by giving the degraded classes freedom without more active help. So most of the great reforms since the Poor Law of 1835 have been cautious moves in the direction of socialism; and in that direction we seem likely to go further. Though society will never be essentially socialist—at least till men are very different from what they are—it might well be more socialist than it is at present. We shall need wary statesmanship, for the problems grow harder every year, and there are wild schemes in abundance; but the line of advance is in this direction, not the other way. Far as we have gone from the individualism of the early nineteenth century, the State is not even now undertaking all that the government of a free State might safely be entrusted with. It is not a foreign power as it is in despotisms and oligarchies, but the true expression of the nation; and we need our growing sense of social duty to strengthen its hands for the struggle against the corrupting influences of the selfish materialism which is common to the actual plutocrats at the top of the scale and the would-be plutocrats at the bottom.

The actual plutocrats are the more pressing danger, both directly and in view of the savage anarchism they are likely to call out. We are coming to a state of

things not unlike the later period of the Roman republic, when an aristocracy of birth was replaced by an oligarchy of wealth, and public opinion was debauched wholesale. We have had samples in South Africa and in America—samples of systematic corruption, of turning men into "hands," of ruthless crushing-out of adverse opinion—and we shall see worse things than these, unless we have sense enough of social duty to make the State put some limit on the power of the great rings to force their own terms on all who have to deal with them. If we are to advance in the knowledge of God, and not to fall back to the alternative between serfdom for most and anarchy for all, the advance will have to be made in the power of a higher sense than ours of social duty. And it will not be the triumph of organization so many seem to look for. It will have to be won like the advances of the past, by the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of the few who will not worship the golden image.

But if the advance of the next age depends on a fuller sense of social duty than we have now, social duty will itself need a fuller vindication than it has now. By this I mean not a higher view of its relation to the individual, though this too is needed, but a fuller sanction. Even those who believe in a divine command will shrink more and more from the crude legalism of resting duty on a bare outside command, without an echo of conscience from within to shew that it is divine. But if man is the image of God, the echo in human nature must echo something in the divine. Can any human duty be firmly established by referring it to human nature only? Can we believe that the social element, which forms

so large a part of human nature, has no counterpart at all in the divine? And if such counterpart exists, it must be eternal. The surface drift seems Unitarian in our time, as it was in the third century, and "advanced thinkers" often take it for certain that the religion of the future will be some form of Unitarianism. Were the political outlook different, I might have less difficulty in agreeing with them; but a broader view of history seems to point another way.

Polytheism was the religion of civilized peoples in ancient times; and when Monotheism first won its victory, it was necessarily conceived in the forms of the Roman Empire, for indeed the Empire was by far the worthiest image of the kingdom of God yet seen on earth. An idealized emperor was a noble conception of God; but it was too legal, and reflected too much of the weakness and cruelty entailed on the executive by the want of a good police. Such as it was, however, the imperial theory ruled the thoughts of Christendom for ages; and when it began to decay after the fall of the Hohenstaufens, it was followed by six hundred years of makeshifts and wavering. Catholics might look to St. Peter's chair for a worthier image of God on earth, while Protestants devolved on princes the divine right of fallen emperors, and presently the "carpenter theory" came in with a fourth conflicting ideal—that of the great Engineer who lives somewhere away in heaven. But now we seem to have reached firm ground. It appears to be finally settled that all these conceptions are not only defective in their several ways, but radically defective; because they represent God as an outside

power acting at intervals only, whereas it is now certain that he is continuously evolving things by immanent law.

But when we ask what there is behind the evolution, only two answers are possible. If we drop religion, it may be the issue of some pantheistic necessity; but if religion is not wholly an illusion, the rigid law cannot express anything short of the *perfect* love of a Father in heaven. And when we have reached the conception of a divine Fatherhood, we cannot go back on it. Like the appearance of man, it must mark the end of a cycle, for however it may be developed in the future, we cannot expect to see it abandoned for the confessedly poorer ideals of past ages. Now we come to the question that concerns us. The Fatherhood of God is a great and imposing truth; but is it strong enough in its current Unitarian form to bear the increasing burden which a developing society will lay on it? On the contrary, I doubt if we can continue to believe it at all, unless we lay increasing stress on that element of the divine nature which makes such a relation possible. If many signs are not misleading, the battle of the next age will be fought round the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, for the simple reason that it is the only serious theory of religion at present before the world which fully vindicates the social element in human nature, by firmly planting it inside the divine.

Varied and far-reaching as the influence of the political development on the conception of the knowledge of God has been, its principle is of the simplest, and can be illustrated in a very few words. That which

is unworthy of man cannot be worthy of God; so that a higher estimate of man cannot but bring with it a higher conception of God. For example, if it is not worthy of man to hold slaves, we may be sure that God will not deal with men as slaves. If the modern free state does well in calling for intelligent as well as loyal help from all its members, we know that the kingdom of heaven will do no less. If a good man will not turn away from the appeal of ignorance and misery for help, we may be sure that God will not be deaf to the cry that cometh up from earth to heaven. If a life of selfish happiness is not the ideal of man, neither can we believe in a God who seeks some other glory than the highest welfare of all his creatures.

LECTURE XXV.

MODERN THOUGHT.

IV.

If science and criticism are in their several ways the study of truth, culture seems to move in a different region, and may be broadly opposed to them as the study of beauty. Thus in literature, the truth of the facts is everything for criticism; for culture, a novel is just as good as a history, if it is as well written. A portrait may be good material for history, and an artistic portrait which expresses permanent character may be more valuable than a photograph which cannot do more than catch the mood of the moment. To the historian the picture may be Washington: the artist labels it Resolution. The historian wants Washington's actual features, and cares for nothing else: the artist may be interested in having them, but a picture of Resolution is none the worse if the features are those of an unknown or imaginary person.

Now this illustration shews that culture is a study of truth after all. Science and criticism express outward facts, culture the artist's idea. And beauty is always the best expression of the idea, as we see even in the

symmetry of mathematical formulæ. The beauty of the epigram or the sparkling metaphor is that it so vividly expresses at least a part of the writer's thought, whereas the faults of a clumsy sentence distract our attention. So too there is beauty of a sort even in a terrible picture, say Remorse, if only it truly pictures remorse.

It may be answered here that science and criticism seek for God's truth outside, while culture cares only for man's truth inside. This is not untrue from the common-sense point of view; but there is much to soften the contrast. First comes the Idealist, who tells us that our perception of God's truth outside is conditioned by the mind within. Then we remember that if man is the image of God, human thought must be in some true sense divine, except so far as sin has made it undivine. Again, the two searches are not radically distinct, for science and criticism bear to our sense of truth precisely the same relation as culture bears to our sense of beauty. Nor can they be sharply separated in practice, so closely are truth and beauty linked together. On the plane of these studies they may be more or less separate, but as integral parts of the one universe they must meet together on some higher level.

Culture is a personal and individual matter on more grounds than one beyond the general reason that beliefs worth living by can only be won by personal effort. It has less than politics or even science of that which is essentially social, and necessarily brings us into close relations with our fellow-men. Literature can be studied in solitude, the musician may play simply for his own pleasure, the sculptor and the portrait-painter

can hire models, and the painter of nature may bury himself in the forest primeval, and do his work none the worse. He scarcely needs, like the student of science or history, to know what others have done before him. Again, philosophy and science have a universal standard of truth which appeals to all men, whereas culture is in the polytheistic stage, with sundry standards of taste which can hardly be brought to a common measure. A final standard is not indeed wanting, but it looms as dimly as the Supreme from behind the pantheon of Iamblichus. The man of culture does not need to be more social than the monk, who gets at most countenance and comfort from his fellows, but no help that is essential. In fact, the "religious" life has a good deal of likeness to the cultured, and no little tendency to pass into it. The corruption denounced by ascetic reformers from the Cluniacs onward had an element of culture as well as one of laxity and vice; and after awhile the reformers themselves always yielded to the irresistible temptation. Yet again, culture is eminently sensitive to outside interference. Patrons are more likely to debase its pursuit than that of science. They have tastes of their own in literature and art, and get these favoured and others discouraged; and the dilettante patron is more inclined to go beyond his depth in culture, where tastes differ, than in science, where he can easily take his own measure. Even when patronage is too enlightened to do much direct harm to culture, it may still debase it in another way, for it is a frequent policy of bad governments to encourage some forms of culture by way of diverting their people from the more serious

questions of religion and politics, so that here again culture becomes an obstacle to the higher interests. The culture of Spain in the seventeenth century is a poor apology for her squalid misgovernment and superstition. In fact, mental activity was almost shut up to culture, for (casuistry excepted) other studies led pretty straight to the Inquisition.[1]

We find, then, two conditions of society specially favourable to culture. In one of these the social idea (in Church or State) is supreme, but thought and action are left free, or even encouraged, in the directions which are most helpful to such growth. In the other, the main trend of thought is individualistic, and the liberty enjoyed by culture is part of a more general liberty practically (if not always theoretically) allowed to other subjects of study. The second state is evidently the more secure of the two, just as personal liberty is safer with a common law which takes it for granted than under special guarantees which are likely to be suspended at the first difficulty. It is also more free, for every department of study in so connected with others that no one of them can be quite free unless all are free.

Here, however, as elsewhere, everything finally depends on the general condition of society. Culture may not be so sensitive to its changes as religion, which sums up so many other lines of thought; but it reflects them in the end. Yet there is a difference in this between different forms of culture. Literature is more nearly allied than art to politics and religion, and is therefore sooner

[1] The stupidity of the Inquisition in this direction almost equalled its cruelty. They arrested Ignatius Loyola more than once.

affected by bad government or a declining civilization; but not even art can hold out indefinitely against their evil influences. Literature chiefly bursts out in times of struggle and times of vigorous growth, while art seems to need a certain amount of quiet, and can go on for some time without seeming very much the worse for it if the quiet is only such as a decaying State can give.

For example, culture flourished at Athens because the State not only left it essentially free, but gave it zealous and enlightened encouragement, and that in the most effective way, by closely connecting it with religion, while the general conditions of politics were in the highest degree stimulating. If they became less so after Alexander's time, the cities of a wider Hellenic world continued and even increased their encouragement of culture; and it was further helped first by the change to an individualistic trend of thought, and afterwards by the settled order of the Empire. If there was not much commanding genius in Roman times, there was a high level of widespread general culture. The literary man has never held a higher social position; and art shewed fewer symptoms of decay than we should expect till the Empire was well advanced on the downward road. In this region as well as others there was a great fall in the third century, with a partial revival (at least for literature) in the fourth, swift and hopeless decay in the fifth. The changes were milder in the East, and the worst of the decay only set in after Justinian's time.

If the early Christians had no special taste for culture, neither were they generally hostile to it, though there were always some inclined to look on it as a profane

distraction from things divine. The Christians had the same education as their neighbours, and the difference was in their favour, for the unity of God gave a new unity and dignity to Nature; and the high value they set on the study of their sacred books was of itself enough to secure that almost every earnest Christian had a touch of culture. So they seem to have been fully equal to the heathens around them. Even in the first age of the Church, St. Paul stands by no means alone among them as a man of culture;[1] and for the next three hundred years almost every Christian writer reaches at least a fair level[2] of culture. In fact, the literary superiority is altogether on the Christian side after the age of Tacitus. Even classical heathenism can shew no more liberal conception of learning than Origen's. On the other hand, their distrust of art was real, and not unreasonable. It was not an objection on principle, for we see from the catacombs that they had a little art of their own, but on definite grounds. A Spanish bull-fight is a pleasant and godly business when compared with the abominations of the amphitheatre, and the stage of the Restoration is a model of decency and soberness as against the realistic shows of Roman times. Ancient civilization had not only to perish, but to be forgotten, before the connexion of art with idol-worships and immoralities could be loosened.

[1] We may name at once Luke, Apollos, Erastus, Dionysius the Areopagite, and the proconsul Sergius Paulus.

[2] Polycrates of Ephesus may be an exception; but Commodianus rather seems (like Gregory of Tours) to use rustic language for a purpose. Clement of Rome may not be very learned; but he cannot well be called uncultivated. Even Hermas is better than he might be.

In the Middle Ages three powerful influences for a long time stopped the growth of culture. Civilization had fallen so low that the world had not culture enough to see the value of culture; and even those who did see something of it were partly hindered by the confusion of the time, partly discouraged by the memory of a higher civilization. Again, society was now a mighty organism which fenced in the life of men with a rule of action which allowed very little freedom of growth. The only escape was into the Church, or better, into a monastery. There a man found an even stricter rule, but also the possibility of more freedom in the direction he wanted. Even here, however, a third bad influence followed him. Asceticism had come into Christianity like other heathen ways of thinking; and it taught that the world and the things in the world are given over to the devil—that they are not, so to speak, the raw material of a holy life, but impediments and snares. So culture was not the monk's calling, and every ascetic revival began by repressing it.

The old love of Nature survived the victory of Christianity; but it perished in the general ruin of the fifth century. The great senator's *villa* as described by Sidonius, with its gardens, its baths, its broad farms, and its *coloni* gathered by hundreds round the mansion, gave place to a castle on the crag, with a few serfs in a miserable village below. Towns on the sea coast moved inland, and towns on the plain were shifted to the hill-tops. There might be a gain in beauty; but sheer safety was the object in those days of piracy and brigandage. If the monks chose beautiful sites, they chose them for wildness, not for beauty. Instead of the

feeling for Nature which is genuine from Clement of Rome and Minucius Felix to Ausonius and later, we find a boorish dulness which seems to notice nothing. Though the crusaders lived in an atmosphere of romance, they saw no romance of Nature in the strange countries they passed through. Such observations as they do make are of the most severely practical sort.[1]

Yet the world was moving in the Middle Ages, after all. Under the hard and narrow tutelage of the Latin Church, foundations were being laid for a wider culture than that of ancient times. As the Roman and the Teuton joined to restore the Empire of Augustus, so they joined again to build up a new Christian world of culture. The work of the Middle Ages was the formation of character. The rude northern nations had to be softened by ages of Christian teaching that the gentler virtues are higher than the rougher, while the worn-out South was learning a new self-respect. At the end of the Middle Ages we see not only new nations and new institutions, but new types of character and new moral ideals.

[1] Thus Raimund of Agiles (*c.* 1) mentions the thick fog in Sclavonia, and (*c.* 5) describes the *military* position of Antioch, while Fulcher of Chartres (*ii.* 21) tells how Bohemund and Baldwin had to eat the sugar-canes when they came up to Jerusalem in the winter. His rapture over Constantinople is no more æsthetic than Athanaric's. The *descriptiones Terræ Sanctæ* (*e.g.* John of Wurtzburg's) are mere hand-books of the holy places, and shew no interest whatever in the country.

So too we have armies continually crossing the Alps; but I have not noticed any allusion to events of the passage (beyond occasional hardships). We hear only that the emperor left Augsburg and came to Verona, or such-like. Nor does anyone seem much impressed by the beauty of the change from Germany to Italy.

It is not to be supposed that (being men) they had no feeling at all of these things. But widespread feeling must be weak if it so seldom finds expression.

Meanwhile no culture flourished or could flourish till the feudal and ecclesiastical systems began to decay, and the ascetic view of life had lost something of its power. Imagination in the earlier Middle Ages is represented by the popular songs and the lives of the saints: but it seemed let loose all at once by the marvellous romance which culminated in the siege of Antioch. The knights of fiction are the idealized images of Robert of Normandy and Godfrey of Boulogne, of Tancred of Galilee and Baldwin of Edessa; the battles they fight are Ascalon and Laodicea fought over again, and the giants they encounter are made in the likeness of Bajji Sijan and Kerboga, with sometimes a touch of Byzantine cunning. So sprang up Trouvères and Minnesingers, and all the romance of Charlemagne and Arthur; and their song was not of knightly valour only, but of its crowning and reward in woman's love. The good knight was no Sir Galahad. He might look for heaven some day, but meanwhile the desire of his heart was the rapture of earthly joy.

Vernacular literature began to escape from the dominance of Latin during the twelfth century,—a stage is clearly marked by the passage in 1189 from Henry Fitz-Empress to Richard Cœur-de-lion, and in the next year from Frederick Barbarossa to the cultured Heinrich VI,—and in the fourteenth it produced great writers like Dante, Petrarch, and Chaucer. The feeling for Nature was reviving. No ascent of a mountain for the sake of the view from the top seems recorded between Hadrian's ascent of Etna and Petrarch's of Mount Ventoux; and Petrarch's qualm of conscience when he had done it is significant.

The love of Nature was very strong in the old Celtic Church, as in Cuthbert and Columba; and no man of the Middle Ages had more of it than Francis of Assisi. These men were ascetics; but they were still more mystics who believed that they knew God for themselves; and the mystic often comes through God to Nature, as we see at large in the Psalms. There was not much love of Nature in thorough-going ascetics like Peter Damiani or Conrad of Marburg, or the zealots of the Counter-Reformation. Even the Jesuits have always done better in science than on the æsthetic side. But generally there was no widespread feeling for the beauty of the world; only, the later Middle Ages had a growing suspicion that the Church had slandered it.

That suspicion became a certainty at the Renaissance. The passion for Nature cherished by Æneas Sylvius was not one of the sins Pius II put away. The revival of Greek learning opened out a new world in the past, the discovery of America a new world in the present. So culture flourished first almost with the old splendour of Greece in the Italian cities, and from them spread out beyond the Alps. But the Italian Renaissance was very much a sink of sin: elegance and abominations went together. Italy was not worthy to keep her primacy. She was demoralized by civil strife, and corrupted by the filthy lucre that came from the papal court; and cynical frivolity in religion marks her decline like that of Greece. The German Humanists were more in earnest, and link on through Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Melanchthon to the Reformation.

" As the Renaissance discovered the world, so the

Reformation discovered God." Its work was to deliver religion, and culture with it, from the paganism of the Renaissance and the obscurantism of the Church, and gradually to claim for Christianity all that was good in the new thoughts which filled that age of vivid life. Its coming was the judgment of the nations. Italy fell an easy victim to the sombre tyranny of Spain, and Spain found the wealth of the Indies as apples of Sodom. Culture passed to the countries which resisted Spain—to the United Provinces, to England, and to France. England was behind in art; but the whole continent could shew nothing to rival the burst of literature which was heralded by the war with Spain in 1585. England had found her siege of Antioch in Drake's voyage, and the exploits of the next few years remained a lasting inspiration. Shakespeare himself was no more than the chief of a brilliant circle; and if he is faintly marked with the characteristic doctrines of the Reformation, we cannot mistake the atmosphere of the Reformation which pervades his works. We cannot imagine them written under the shadow of a Marian reaction.

One great result of the Reformation was the much wider spread of culture which it made possible. A man who knows his Bible (say George Fox or John Bunyan) cannot be quite uncultured; and it was the first care of the Reformers that every man should know his Bible. Luther and Knox were thorough believers in education; and the English Reformers did as much as was possible for men who were in no position to overcome the all-devouring greed of turn-coat nobles. Of course, the immediate shock of change was disastrous; and it was

greatly aggravated by the Marian reaction, so that England took time to recover from it; but the recovery during the long peace of Elizabeth (1559–1585) was marvellous.

After the wars of religion came the wars for the balance of power; and culture reflected the change. In Holland we see it as we pass from the age of Grotius and Hooft, Huyghens and Vondel, to the French fashions of William III's time. There is no stimulant of high thought like a hard struggle for vital truth, such as Northern Europe fought against the Jesuits and the Inquisition. Its abundance can well spare what is wasted or soured in controversy, or debased by the rage of war. Even the demoralizing Thirty Years' War, which ceased to be fought for religion after Lützen, did not bring down Northern Germany so low as Italy and Spain sank after Philip IV, or as the Austria of Leopold I. In England the tension was not finally relaxed till the power of the last great threatening Romish tyrant was broken at Blenheim. Still, if we put it roughly, the Peace of Westphalia and the English Restoration separate a comparatively natural period of culture from an artificial one full of affectations, and well symbolized by its Dutch gardens.

French fashions prevailed long after French aggression had been stopped at Utrecht; and French literature in the great age of Racine and Bossuet was almost as artificial as the court in which it flourished. While science advanced steadily, culture made little progress in the generation after the Peace of Utrecht. The age of Walpole and Fleury is a time of stagnation in Europe,

But England was much the most vigorous of the nations, and a wave of English influence was passing over Germany and France. The war of the Austrian Succession opens a new period for all three countries. In England we have the devotional reaction; and if Methodists and Evangelicals were much less literary than the Puritans, they were incomparably more poetical. In Germany we see the endeavours of Lessing to foster a native literature and philosophy, looking rather to England for help than to France for guidance. Meanwhile Haller's *Alps* and Thomson's *Seasons*, artificial as they were, seem to begin a return to Nature in both countries, however disfigured it might be for a time by sentimentality.

In France the English influence fell in with the dislike of educated men for a government so bigoted and corrupt, so arbitrary and yet so weak, as that of Louis xv. It fostered admiration, not so much of Nature as of Deism and English liberty; though French Deism was more aggressive than English, readily passing over into the materialistic atheism of von Holbach's friends, and equality rather than constitutional government was made the mark of freedom. The three lines of thought—the deistic, the democratic, and the æsthetic—were united in Rousseau. With all his sickly sentimentalism and absurd idealizing of savage life, he is a genuine lover of Nature, and as such links on across the Revolution to the Romanticists.

We need not trace the movement further. The return wave of French influence was strong in England. If Deism never took root afresh, the democracy and the

æstheticism came to the front when the exhaustion of the great war had passed away—but with characteristic differences. There was not much revolutionary impatience in the Whigs of the Reform Bill, not much French sentimentalism in Wordsworth and Scott. But the great feature of the nineteenth century with regard to culture is its astonishing diffusion. It has been democratized along with politics, and more successfully. Music and art are no longer the property of the classes, and education is open to all. If the taste of the vulgar is vulgar, and their interest in Nature sometimes takes destructive forms—as when all the ferns are carried away—even this is an advance on boorish ignorance. The universities have always been essentially democratic since the age of Robert of Lincoln. The rich may still find it easier to come there than the poor; but once there, they have to find their own level. Cavendish had no advantage over Philpott and Thurtell. And in the last half century the universities have come out into the country, and been a quickening spirit in the land. Learning in the widest sense is now fully recognized as like religion, a field where all must meet on equal terms.

But now, what is the bearing of culture on the conception of the knowledge of God? It is every way subtle, and as yet I think much less fully understood than some of the other influences. Broadly speaking, culture stands to science and politics in something of the relation of the religion of Greece to that of Rome. As the scientific and the political developments bring out the conceptions of order and justice as divine, so

does the æsthetic cherish the sense of mystery, and consecrate the ideas of beauty and goodness. There is no more mystery in a science of sequences than in the old religion of Rome. Sequences are either known or unknown. If known, they can be fully expressed; and if unknown, we shall be able to express them fully as soon as we know them. The limit of science is not mystery but ignorance, for everything is clear so far as it is known. We only reach the half-lights of mystery when we come to causes—that is to say, to will and feeling. The artist and the poet are prophets of that which they cannot fully express to others, or even fully understand themselves. The background of thought is indeed a mystery for all of us, a realm of things which even if known cannot be fully expressed; but the man of science (as such) turns away from the frontier whenever he comes to it, while the man of culture gazes across it.

In this respect culture is nearer than science to religion, for religion is as full of mystery as art and poetry, because it deals like them with the will and feeling which are so deeply rooted in human nature. If the man of science goes astray, he is likely to go after a bare Deism or an unimaginative pantheism, whereas the man of culture decks out his pantheism or superstition with the rainbow colours of mystery and fancy. Here is half the difference of Protestant and Catholic. The one seeks for truth, and strives to set it in the clear light of day; the other looks for beauty, and loves to surround it with the dim religious light of mystery. If the one forgets that truth is a mystery, the other

does not care to remember that the mystery ought to be true. And, after all, though it is a mean and narrow faith, which fears the twilight as children fear the dark, it is an even lower form of religion which refuses to share with science and philosophy that austere love of truth as truth which is the love of all that is divine.

It may be that the secret of culture lies nearer than we know to that of life itself. Feeling seems nearer than mind to the final mystery of personality. There is deep truth in the ancient delusion that sexual pleasure is a form of worship, and in the modern delusion that æsthetic pleasure is essentially religious. There is the same truth, and the same mistake, in both. The man is base indeed who enjoys the one without at least some passing touch of the loving self-surrender which is one essential of religion, or the other without something of the reverent and loving thankfulness which is another fundamental. But in and for itself, neither the one nor the other is any way religious. It is made religious only by the fact that the instinct of religion is rooted in the lowest deeps of human nature, so that the feelings which come up from those deeps will give as true communion with everything divine—provided we cherish them, instead of turning our pleasures into selfishness. The selfishness may be sensual and gross. as at Babylon or Corinth ; or it may be sensuous and refined, as in the Italian Renaissance : but in either case, and equally, it makes life a school of wickedness. Culture is not worth much till that is joined with it which utterly forbids the artistic selfishness of a cultured life of self-absorption.

In some ways Israel understood the meaning of culture even better than the Greeks. They both felt that God is good and not envious, and that all the beauty of the world is divine; and they both strove to join culture to religion; only, Israel had a nobler religion to join it to. So the loftiest words of culture are not in Plato, but in the Psalms: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. . . . The Lord shall *rejoice* in his works."[1] It seems to clinch the old teaching that every good giving is divine as well as every perfect gift, and to claim every beautiful work[2] as well as every good work for that kingdom of God whose reality every Theist must acknowledge.

Here, in connexion with æstheticism and culture, may be the most suitable place for the ritualistic neo-Anglicans; or, if not for themselves, at least for the mention of them which cannot be avoided. Common opinion, including their own, regards them as the direct successors of the Tractarians; and as a broad view, this is beyond question. They trace their own descent to

[1] Ps. civ. 31.

[2] The teaching of the New Testament is much obscured by the indiscriminate translation of καλὸν as well as ἀγαθὸν by *good*. Using a little variety in translating καλὸν, we get, for instance—

Mt. v 16. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your noble works.

xxvi 10. She hath wrought a noble work on me.

Joh. x 32. Many noble works have I shewn you.

Rom. xii 17 RV. Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men.

Gal. vi 9. Let us not be weary in doing that which is honourable.

1 Tim. v 10. Well reported of for honourable works.

These are samples of passages where the stress is rather on moral beauty than on moral goodness.

the Oxford school, and profess the same general principles of reverence for tradition, which in their case also means the Romish tradition, and utter condemnation of the Reformation as little better than pure and simple wickedness. If we add to this the fact that many of the Tractarians threw in their lot with the new school, and most of the others gave it something more than a negative support, we get a strong personal link in addition to the doctrinal.

Yet this would be misleading if it were presented as the whole truth. In the first place, the two parties are historically separated by the Mansel Controversy, which exposed to the world the philosophical scepticism at the root of Tractarianism. It became harder now for reasoning men to base religion on unreason, and all parties were forced to reconsider and to modify their positions. So, after a pause, the catholicizing party appeared in a new form. At first the new men seemed only to go further than the old. If the Tractarians treated the Articles as "hostile documents" whose meaning had to be cut down as much as possible, they had prided themselves on their strict conformance to the Liturgy. That, at any rate, was "catholic." But now every priest was encouraged to alter on his own authority the Common Prayer he had given his promise to use unaltered, and systematically to set aside the order he had accepted of "this Church and Realm" in favour of a higher law supposed to be found in "catholic practice." And this higher law was not commonly traced out historically, but taken up almost at random. A sentence from the Fathers, a canon of a mediæval council, a

rubric of a repealed Liturgy, a modern custom of the Church of Rome, served to justify any priest in making it a point of conscience to disobey the admitted order of the English Church, and to refuse the jurisdiction of its courts. Even the authorities they relied on, such as they were, they seldom dealt with by any more intelligent process than that of tearing out convenient phrases from their context.

This was pure anarchy. The ritualists are not a fairly uniform party like the Tractarians, but a chaos of conflicting parties united only by their common hatred of the Reformation. Some of them are apes of Rome with hardly sense enough to play the ape; but in others there is a leaven of ideas which would have seemed strange and doubtful to the early Tractarians. They have moved with the times, and in some sort answered to the development of society, to the growth of science and criticism, and especially to the spread of æstheticism. The new elements are visibly gaining on the old. The social came first, for those were the days of the second Reform Act. Unlike the austere aristocrats of Tractarianism, these men have gone down among the people, and learned something in the slums. They learned the power of preaching, which the Tractarians despised as "hardly a means of grace, if a means of grace at all"; and some of them learned that there is more power, after all, in common Christianity than in their own peculiar opinions. To the Tractarians the doctrine of the Church was little more than a stone to throw at the heretics; but these men have also made it a bond of union between different

classes of their people. Some of them have become ardent social reformers, and deserve high credit for the good and successful work they have done in the poorer parts of the towns. But that work has at least one heavy drawback which cannot in fairness be overlooked. Their methods of education are very commonly partizan in the worst sense. The aim is not simply to teach their own beliefs in the way good teachers will, but (so far as skilful organization can secure it) to make their pupils permanently blind to any truth which may lie outside the party shibboleths. We need not raise the question whether it is consistent with common honesty to use an official position for such a purpose: at all events, it is a complete reversal of the whole meaning of education, and contributes more than anything to the present bitterness of controversy, and to the widespread distrust of the clergy.

Then, science and criticism are new elements. The Tractarians had no interest in these, except to denounce them as strongly as they could. Many of them seemed quite capable of repeating the condemnation of Galileo. On criticism they were as narrow as the narrowest of Evangelicals; and further, the positions they had to maintain were in such flagrant contradiction of historical facts, that their defence of them could not fail to suggest the gravest suspicions of their good faith. Many of the ritualists are no better now; but the party as a whole is less indifferent to general education. Many of them seem to feel that science and criticism cannot be simply ignored; and of late years some of them have been willing to make very considerable concessions,

reserving always the final authority of catholic tradition. Concession is easier to them than to the Evangelicals, for there is force in what one of them once said to me: "We have the Church; it does not much matter what becomes of the Bible." So far, however, as we can see at present, they are more disposed to fall back on Pusey than to advance with Gore.

These three new elements in religion are pure gain, but the fourth is more doubtful. Social science, criticism, and science generally rest on facts, and appeal directly to the sense of truth; æstheticism rests on taste, and appeals directly to the sense of beauty. In a higher sense, as we have seen, art does appeal to the sense of truth; but common men have hardly yet come up to this. Indeed, it is not unlikely that the average of taste has been lowered of late by its wider spread. Certainly the growth of sensationalism and of advertisement in all its forms is becoming a serious danger to the national character. It has not spared the Church; and the ritualists are by no means the only offenders. But it is common among them. They found it attractive to the people; and music and art are not like science and criticism, which call on a man to render a reason for his belief. It was good that there should be a reaction from the bare churches and cold services of the early nineteenth century, though the bareness and coldness have been exaggerated; but it is a serious question whether we are not now going much too far the other way. Magnificent and ornate services cost a good deal, and increase the temptation to run churches on commercial principles, considering first of all what will

draw a paying congregation, or secure some rich man's liberal support. Have we not many Church services in which devotion is all but openly subordinated to æsthetic and artistic pleasure? A harvest festival, for instance, in a town parish, kept up with special services and extra special music for nearly a fortnight, looks very like an excuse for a perpetual concert. When men were tired of controversy in the eighteenth century, they made a tolerable peace in the Church by dropping the religion and preaching morality instead. Have we not forces among us, and increasing forces, which tend to a peace of the same sort, with art and music in the place of moral teaching?

Ritualism is a great complex of movements, whose full meaning is not yet apparent; and its various elements differ greatly in value for the higher conception of revelation in the future. The Tractarian element is essentially sceptical, and its unreason and schismatic temper a mere return into Egypt; but there is hope in all the newer elements, for though the æsthetic danger is real, it may be no more than a stage we shall pass when we understand its meaning better. Nothing but good can come of serious endeavours to set religion straight with social science, criticism, and science in general; and though such efforts may long be hampered by the unreasoning obscurantism of the original Tractarianism, we must not forget that the movement is still in the chaotic stage. Just because it is a scene of anarchy, we may expect developments both upward and downward in directions none of us can yet divine. Sometimes there is a lofty irony

in history, which to those in the thick of battle seems to send deliverance from the midst of Satan's camp. Who took Saul of Tarsus from the Pharisees, or Luther from the mendicants? So may it be again.

LECTURE XXVI.

THE FUTURE.

We have now passed in review three great reactions from the Protestant orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. We have seen something of the devotional reaction which distrusted reason, and something of the catholicizing reaction which set reason at defiance; and we have glanced over some of the chief sections of the great forward movement which trusted reason—Deism and rationalism, philosophy and science, criticism and politics, and with some hesitation we added culture. Each of these has been set up as a rival to religion, as a substitute for it, or as its controlling idea; and each of them has helped to develop our conception of the knowledge of God, lifting it to a higher plane, freeing it from imperfect and unworthy ideas inherited from the past, and shewing more and more of the vast substructure on which religion is built.

But now, may there not be a fourth and more excellent way than any of these? There can be no hope for the future in the cowardly scepticism of a return to the forms of the past. Even the authentic words God spake to them of old cannot be the words he speaks to us. Philosophy, science, criticism, culture,

social reform cannot give more than partial and limited views of the knowledge of God. The devotional reaction has the root of the matter in it; but it is still too much cumbered with particular theories which do not seem inseparable from the great truths they shelter. May there not, for example, be a sufficient inspiration which is not verbal, a reversal of sin by other means than simple substitution, a change of heart which is not a technical conversion, a future punishment by other means than literal and unending fire? Such questions as these were well worth asking half a century ago; and if they are less pressing now, the change is chiefly due to the influence of Maurice and the so-called Broad Church.

Like the Alexandrian school and the Cambridge Platonists, Maurice and his friends had a singularly wide and fearless outlook on the problems of life. They had as much of piety and as little of mannerism as any men, a true regard for law and order without slavery to forms or fashions, and above all, their love of truth was void of fear. Maurice was as open to new truth as Clement himself, and more expectant of it. The complaint of some, that there are no Broad Churchmen left, seems a mistake. It was not the object of Maurice and his friends to form a party in the Church, but to spread certain ideas and ways of thinking amongst all parties. Nor, indeed, was the Broad Church quite suited to become permanent, even as a school. It stood rather for tendencies than for definite doctrines, and its very width of view prevented it from gathering its whole position into clear watchwords. The haze which so often rests on Maurice's thought marks it indeed as of a higher

order than the clear-cut systems around him, but marks it also as belonging rather to the development of the future than to the party contests of the present. Like the Alexandrians and the Cambridge Platonists, Maurice and his friends felt that the current conceptions of God were unworthy, and needed all the resources of human thought and feeling to widen them, and make them fit to represent Christ's teaching. Width was their aim; and it must be ours.

In religion, as in politics, we must begin with the best materials we have. An English reformer in his right mind would begin with Parliament, however convinced he might be that it would have to be reformed into something very different. Even more must we begin with Christianity. It is the *de facto* religion of all civilized nations but Japan; and even those who deny its facts mostly have the highest praise for its morality. In any case—were it only to avoid a revolution—the problem will have to be worked out in terms of Christianity. If the facts of the Gospel are true, they will remain: if not, they will drop out of themselves from the ideal we shall reach. What that ideal is matters less just now than the way to reach it; and that I think is fairly clear.

The vision that floats before me is a vast synthesis of all the experience which the human race has ever had or ever will have had. First, we must have full trust in reason to verify and define the facts of that experience. The Agnostic is out of court, whether he calls himself a Christian or something else. We shall want everything that philosophy can tell us of the work-

ing of the divine within us, the whole teaching of science about its working in the world, the most searching criticism to unravel its course in history; and we shall need the highest of culture to throw over all the divine charm of grace and beauty. But this is not enough: no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. No one man born in sin can reach the many-sided fulness of truth. We need a deeper social science to set our relations to each other in a fuller light of truth, and to shape our society more after the dim outline of that kingdom of God which every Theist must believe in, though he may not call it by a Christian name. But this again is not enough. As no one man can cover the divine expanse of truth, so neither can any one nation. After all the advances we boast of in our civilization, we have inherited by far the largest part of it from the past. History was old when the pyramids were built, Greece and Israel already stand on the platform of an ancient civilization, and every generation has added to the august tradition which is now the common heritage of cultured nations. But Asia must help us too. It is impossible that the new-born energy of Japan should never have anything better to teach us than the mere craft of war.[1] The ancient wisdom of India may well have a new career before it, now that we ourselves have

[1] Hitherto, in spite of its Eastern origin, the triumphs of the Christian religion have been limited to the West. Is it not possible that the falling off of mediæval dogma, in which so many fearful Christians at home see so much danger to the faith, may be simply the prelude to a new revival, which will sweep away the Occidental boundaries that have hitherto confined the creed which Christ taught?—*Spectator*, January 27, 1906 (discussing Christianity in Japan).

made for ever vain her immemorial barriers of the Indus and the desert. More than this, I can well believe that some of the noblest work of a not distant future may come from peoples on whose ancestors we ourselves look down as proudly as of old imperial Rome looked down upon our own.

Now, can we stop here? Is not all this enough? Certainly it is not. All this may be vast and grand; but all this as yet is dead. We may have philosophy and science, criticism and culture in perfection, and a finely organized society too, and still have no life in us. But where shall the spark of life be found? The deep saith, it is not in me; the sea saith, it is not with me: yet it is found in the land of the living. Now you must not mistake me if I tell you what it is. The spark of life is mysticism. I do not mean the follies and worse than follies which bear the name, but the conviction, acted on if not expressed, that a true communion with the divine is given to all that purify themselves with all the force of heart and soul and mind. If there is a man without a touch of this mystic faith, that man is dead while he liveth; for there can be no personal religion, and therefore no true religion, without something of it. Its most definite form is the Christian—he that hath this hope in God purifieth himself as the Man of Nazareth was pure. But it may be quite as real when it is much less definite than this, or not even consciously expressed at all. Those of us who believe in a true light whose ever-present coming into the world lighteth every man, are beyond all others bound to confess that every work which is done on the face of the wide earth for love or

duty is as truly communion with God as the Supper of the Lord itself can be, from the Three Hundred in the pass to the child in the slums who gives his last penny to one that needs it more than he does. Here is the secret of the knowledge of God. One common duty done with a true heart will teach more of it than any amount of learning. And it is just the common duties which teach more of it than the great victories. The Man of Nazareth shewed his knowledge of men as well as of things divine when he gave us to understand that it is a greater work to give the cup of cold water than to raise the dead. And in these "greater works" there can be no distinction of race and rank, of age and sex, of learned and simple, and least of all of Christian and pagan. The Church of the first-born which are written in heaven is not limited by election or formal conversion, or even by the Christian name. Its doors are open to all that seek and follow truth, for, as Hort would say, every thought of the heart which is in any sense unworthy is first of all untrue.

We Christians are often told that we ought to close up our ranks against the common enemy; and this is good advice, in so far as this reminds us that some of our divisions are over trifles. Only let us be sure that we do not mistake the common enemy, for it is not simply he that followeth not with us. Christians against the rest is neither a truthful nor a Christian war-cry: it is only the old refuge of lies which the flood shall sweep away. Science is not the enemy, however hostile the conclusions which the unscientific method of a sceptical philosophy tries to pass off as genuine results of science.

Criticism is not the enemy, however strange the guise in which the uncritical method of a sceptical philosophy returns the old history to us. If truth is truth, all wanderings will sooner or later come round again to truth. Even less do I fear the volcanic forces which threaten to upheave our social structure. We shall not perish like the old French *noblesse* till we deserve to perish. When we deliberately cherish untruth and open wrong as they did, we may read the writing on the wall. As a nation we have not done that; but we have paid for the gold of South Africa with widespread corruption, and the return to a better mind will be harder than partizans imagine. So of other countries. Shakings there shall be, shakings of earth and heaven; but only that will pass away which ought to pass away.

There is a deeper scepticism in the return to authority than in particular results, however sceptical, reached by those who seek for truth in philosophy or science or criticism. We sin the sin of sins only when we turn our back on truth, as we do when we make authority our refuge from the first duty of reasoning men. It is not the Latin Church which is the enemy, far less the Latin churchman: it is the spirit of scepticism which is most fully embodied in the Latin Church, and spreads from it like a poisonous vapour through the world. That Church is the mother of most of the scepticism. She has to answer not only for the scepticism of her own direct teaching, but largely also for the scepticism which other Churches have carried over from her, and for the scepticism of the reactions which her teaching has provoked and still provokes inside and outside her own

communion. Many of her bitterest enemies take her word for it that religion is unreason, and for that cause or on that excuse reject it with abhorrence. Yet once again, if there is any truth at all in religion, none but the highest ideals can be true, and irreligion lies in following the lower in preference to the higher. The Latin ideals are the lower, and the high priest of irreligion calls himself the Vicar of Christ.

Many years ago it was my fortune to spend a Sunday in the great and ancient city of Lyons. Towards evening we climbed the height of Fourvières. A glorious historic site was at our feet, with memories reaching backward to the Council which smote the Hohenstaufen Empire into ruins, and backward still to the time when the threescore states and five of Gaul came year by year to render thanks to heaven for the blessings of the Roman peace. They told us that we could see the Alps. But I looked vainly into the mists that were gathering over the broad plain beyond the meeting of the rivers. "Look higher": and there they were. High in the air above, the last rays of sunshine lighted up those glorious domes of rosy snow, full seventy miles away. Like those mountains is the revelation of God in history and in your own life. You will not find it in the mists of selfishness and cherished sin. Lift up your hearts, and you will see it looking down on you. But it is not the setting sun which lights the Church of God, the Church of all that love and follow truth. It is the light of the morning, the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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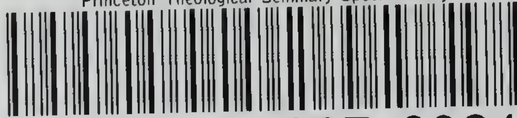
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